

A Jazz Story
Spirits Rejoice: Book One

Colston Willmott



Shire Pocket Book Editions
3500K Shinglespit Road
The Shire • Deaf Cat Lane
Hornby Island, British Columbia
Canada V0R 1Z0

Dream Sequences
Somewhere in a Dystopian Future

Published as an edition of 50 copies.

Colston Willmott is a character invented
by William E. Smith in *Rant & Dawdle*
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who has metamorphosed as a novelist.

Thank You

Natasha Smith and Don Black
for your assistance in making the original
manuscript into a readable document.

Thelonious Monk Puzzle
from a photograph by
William E. (Bill) Smith



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Hey Dad, his daughter had called out, there's a saxophone player on the radio who sounds just like you.

Stick with me, Tony Kelvin had said, and I'll make you a star. Well, that hadn't happened had it; to either of them. So long ago, now, that had been. How long? Fifty years? Farrington Gurney flopped back in his favourite wicker chair, barely awake, another old memory trickling feebly into his dilapidated crumbling brain. Half of it gone, smudged.

Looking back was about all he could do, seein' as how he was approaching his hundredth birthday. Or so he reckoned. He'd been playing one of his old recordings, of course they was all old, he hadn't played a musical instrument for more than thirty years. Most of the saxophones are cast aside, jammed up, stuck solid, assorted gunk building up crud on the pads and tone hole rims, the springs rusted, the whole instrument a solid useless lump, abandoned, laying prone in its smelly, tatty, velvet-lined coffin. His drum kit is unplayable, the skins worn thin, all the mechanical movement of the high-hat, the bass drum

pedal, worn to a frazzle, the springs not springing. And the small assortment of concertinas wheezing helplessly, their leather bellows holey, rotted. There's still electricity, generated by a wind powered generator rescued from the back yards of long-gone neighbours who were conscientious enough in their day to believe in power-saving devices. He'd found several on the abandoned lots, enough to provide spare parts.

Either that or sitting comfortable, thread-bare Panama hat keeping the glaring at bay, his old-style wicker chair in a perfect location among the circle of brambles, the gorgeous colours of broom, the tangle of wild roses and morning glory, salmonberry, all celebrating spring, reading a book from his capacious library, jazz biographies of Monk, Miles, Mingus, Ornette, Trane... that he'd always intended to read. Never had the time. Now he has nothing else but. His only visitors are families of deer that amble in from the forest out back, approaching fearlessly, his presence a long accepted intrusion. Herds of them looking for hand-outs from his tiny enclosed garden, a

treat to supplement their daily chomp of grass. Still their round soft brown eyes, slitted against the sunlight, flicker about, scanning, sensing danger.

He was never much good at estimating distances, how far away the horizon might be, now the surrounding twenty-foot high brambles closing in over all these years, blocking out any sort of view except the sight of the berries coming alive in the late summer – nutrition – only yards away. Well thirty feet perhaps. Encircling. How could he tell? Them always slowly closing in like that. The exit to the narrow laneway, a small archway cut through into the labyrinth, leading eventually down to the beach, is a prickly tunnel filled with the conversations of birds, insects and small animals, secret language clicking, clucking, snuffling, ghostly glottal stops whispering, not quite readily available: calling morning awake to evening dying into darkness. And all day long a rhapsodious orchestra of songs improvising with the susurrating, rustling, creaking forest. Noisy *dryocopus pileatus* bebopping jungle rhythms; the great horned owl Wol,

echo hoots; robins, juncos, starlings, sparrows irritating chirruping. Occasionally, spooked, he hears unattached voices floating across the unseen channel isolating him from the mainland, boaters perhaps, their dialogue without content, rising up among the early morning mist, joining the whirling voices holding fast in his head. A jumbled babbling symphony. Befuddling. The air smells of spring, what month is unclear, except that the *clupea harengus pallasii* have returned to spawn, laying thousands of eggs, sticky as they squirt out, attaching themselves to everything, their positions revealed by the milky white trail left by the male, a bounteous banquet for the hoards of marine birds wheeling about, screeching in delight. Sea lions bellowing and barking, jostling for position; sea ducks – the punked hair-cutted red-breasted merganser, double-crested cormorants and *clangula hemalis* gathering in rafts, diving; eagles snatching the spawned-out herring from the surface, and gulls – the scavengers – gobbling up the scraps. Cacophonous hundreds of thousands.

Since Hilperton had arrived in the big city he has become overly sensitive of his lack of style, his former clodhopper personality readily apparent – a yokel, despite his desperate attempts to exude hipness. Don't you feel scruffy when you're visiting the city – a newly found friend had asked, as he perused Hilperton from head to toe, taking in the haphazard collection of hand-me-downs that were his attire. Saint Vincent de Paul being his favourite tailor. Rumpled, mismatched au naturel linen jackets and trousers a speciality, red scuffed shoes, the genuine leather worn off the toe of the left one. And the centrepiece, jauntily plonked atop his head, a Royal Stetson stingy brimmed Fedora hat; dark brown with a stylish, slightly stained, wide gold gros-grain band with a fancy flat bow, a bright red white and blue artificial feather tucked behind it. The lining's a little loose, but intact, and in the brim, its edge overwelt, with a single line of stitching, a mysterious, almost invisible hole is punched, not more than 1/32nd of an inch in diameter, possibly with the intention of securing a nationalistic label pin, or considering the hat's previous owner, something more ominous,

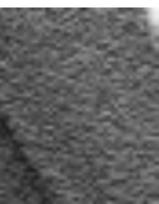
an enamelled portrait of Lenin or the insignia of some leftist organisation.

The fit of his classy hat is a shade tight, half a size too small, necessitating a modest correction, achieved by slitting the leather sweatband attached to the inside circumference with a razor blade. Surprising that Hilperton's head would be larger than the previous owner, identified by the initials W S L – an abbreviation of Wick St. Lawrence O.C. M.Sc. D.Sc., a really famous political scientist – which sit next to the supplier's name *Louie Stohlblocker • CROSSTOWN & MAIN*, supplemented with a multi-antlered stag logo, all gold embossed.

Out of curiosity he'd wandered up Main Street past the gigantic Scientology headquarters – Ronnie's ersatz religion having replaced the failed traditional doctrines, past the Midtown Theatre screening government agitprop 24/7, to the corner at Crosstown Boulevard, where buried amidst the towering blocks of glass and concrete, monolithic monstrosities disguised with holograms depicting the perfect life, masking their true intention, headquarters

of corporate control, sits Louie Stohlblocher's antiquated two storey building, its turn of the century façade, wood-framed glass display windows, and fading hand-painted signage a visual joy amongst all the artificial sameness.

The splendiferous interior has etched glass-topped mahogany cases filled with cufflinks and tie pins resting on purple velvet, floor to ceiling traditional oak wood panelling, foot square beams crisscrossing the low ceiling. Customers are serviced by shop assistants in formal attire, a tape measure hanging about their necks, at the ready, looking old enough to have been serving the public since the shop opened in 1901, more than 150 years of sartorial tradition, Hilperton entering a world of English gentleman's luxurious haberdashery; Saville Row tweed sports jackets with leather patched elbows, elegant corduroy, dress pants, business suits and tailored shirts made by the likes of Daks, Aquascutum and Scabal, a basement filled with outerwear from Barbour and Burberry perfect for fox hunting on an autumn's day, the \$1000-a-pop wool overcoats, well out of his price range. No one noticing his custom-made Royal Stetson Fedora.



Sneaking about at night was Ashley Down's entire experience inside and outside the towering walls of the compound. There had never been, according to her parents, any reason to go elsewhere, the gated community of Baroque Bluffs tending all her needs. What more could she require? Schooling was formal and remote, the lessons appearing daily on her computer screen. As were the permitted video games and films. The twice-a-week youth group activities at the community centre should have been ample entertainment for any teenager: girl guides, reading to the elderly, and volleyball, jazzercise, yoga – junior versions of her mother's humdrum routines.

Her mother, considered to be a traditionalist, requisitions the household commodities from the approved supplier's weekly availability list, delivered to their door every Monday morning at 9:00am. The mundane chores of cooking and cleaning taken care of by Asuncion, the bused-in Puerto Rican immigrant home-help. She thinks of her father as somewhat of a cipher, diddlysquat, a corporate clerical clone glued to his ever-present laptop computer.

Family entertainment is nonexistent, her parents' idea of fun being the 'good old-fashioned' Bridge or Whist, card games played interactively on the family computer with unseen contestants. Sometimes Solitaire, when the need for privacy arises. And the three official television channels: 24/7 NHL Hockey Games sponsored by Bauer Hockey, Inc.; Government regulated news and infomercials bankrolled by Monsanto; and a Disney children's channel, like, really lame.

Recently, poking around in the basement storage room, the most interesting – rarely visited – room in the house, she has uncovered a number of unfamiliar articles: two smelly mildewed books; one a diary belonging to her grandfather, the other a dictionary, and a small plastic box, that when she scrubs away the grime reveals the name Sony Superscope 200 combination Cassette-Corder FM/AM Radio. All manner of knowledge secreted away.

The pages of the other mysterious book, filled with words and meanings, is H.W. Fowler[s] - A Dictionary of Modern English Usage [Second Edition] Revised by Sir Ernest

Gowers - Published by Oxford University Press 1968, sixty-four years before she was born. The pages are stuck together in a solid block of smelly discoloured brown-stained paper, separated at page 316 by a thin embossed ornate leather strip with the just readable message: *And He will provide for them from sources they never imagine... Qur'an (65:3)*. The word **jazz** highlighted.

Jazz is primarily the name given to a type of dance music of American negro origin that first became widely known at the beginning of the 20th c. and is now popular all over the world. As a musical term it has resisted all attempts at exact definition; all that can be said is that in its most characteristic form it is in common time with a pizzicato bass in crochets to offset a syncopated solo, often improvised. Or, as Sir Kenneth Clark has put it more picturesquely, comparing jazz with action painting, 'The trumpeter rises from his seat as one possessed and squirts out his melody like a scarlet scrawl against a background of plangent dashes and dots'.

Grandpa's cramped spidery writing is difficult to decipher, the damp having caused the ink to spread about the pages, blotting out many of the words, a challenge for a girl who has never written with an ink-filled pen, her schooling totally focused on keyboards and screens. Down there in the cluttered subterranean storage facility, lounging in an old stuffed chair rescued from a pile of abandoned furniture, she sits for hours, fascinated by her grandpa's life, family history completely unknown to her. When she arrives at September 23rd, 2032, her birth date, she makes a startling discovery, that on this day she was legally adopted by this suburban couple, that they are not her biological parents, that somewhere outside the walled confinement of Baroque Bluffs, she has another family with the name of Marsh.

From across the street, at this time of day, before the sun had risen over the tops of the deserted buildings, it appeared as though the buildings' frontage was continuous, had all been built in the same time, but as the sun partially illuminated the north side of the promenade, it became slowly apparent that the east end of the terrace was an addition, a later thought. As though dividing the two periods there was a door set in the newer brickwork, not that obvious, blending into the lack of character that this street, named after antediluvian English aristocracy, possessed. It was not entirely apparent what purpose these buildings served, but at a cursory glance, which is all that Hilperton Marsh has ever given them, they appeared to be apartments or perhaps a warehouse of one kind or another. The door's paint was peeling.

He crossed the street, more out of curiosity than intent, and approached the door. A twist of the knob revealed that it was unlocked, turning freely, and although not surprised, he did ponder whether his next action should be forceful. Why not, he thought, I've come this

far. With minimal exertion, the door creaked ajar, not firmly suspended on its hinges, yielding, scraping a semicircle in the accumulated feculence lodged behind. The surprise was that it did not give way to an abandoned building, but rather an alleyway whose walls rose on each side, perhaps three storeys in height. Confirming the original supposition that the building to the east had indeed been an addition. The passageway formed by the two walls seemed to serve no purpose, was arrived at by chance, a design fault occurring when the buildings, constructed from each end of the short block, had not joined together as planned. A false frontage, complete with a door that led nowhere. The wall to the west seemed to be the oldest, the crumbling brickwork, a faded mural still visible, relieved by a half basement window, the glass so caked in grime it was not possible to envisage the room beyond. A hand-rubbed circle, clearing the view, through which for a brief flash was seen a withdrawn head, a quivering print curtain.

High up, a small square window, possibly the window of a bathroom or a kitchen. Paint flaking

from the unattended wooden frames. The east wall, the newer of the two, but only by less than a decade or maybe only a month, was blank, rising up not as though one side of a building but just a wall, its only adornment a sparse growth of ivy, dust covered and feeble; starved of light, or attention. The passageway was, in total, perhaps six feet wide, scarcely wider than the door frame through which he had entered; and not paved, rough dirt still scattered with the remnants of long ago forgotten rubble from the construction. The light, which had as yet not infiltrated this slot between, was grey, and he thought that perhaps it was never truly illuminated, only for a short time during a summer day when a wedge found its way between these thirty foot high walls. At the end of the passageway was another door that appeared in slightly better repair than the one through which he had entered. There was nothing to observe, no treasures to be found among the rubble, and all that seemed left to do was continue, investigate the second door. The dust settled onto his shoes in a distasteful layer, and there, that smell that comes from forgotten alleyways.

Directly in front, apart from the sealed metal door tucked into the right corner, the end of the passageway was blocked off by another wall, windowless, boxed in, the only adornment a miniature rusting fire escape, the kind one expects to see in movies depicting danger, the back alleyways in New York's Bowery, the secret entrances to gambling clubs operated by the likes of Dutch Schultz and Lucky Luciano. An emergency exit. The first platform, constructed of open steel grating, was fixed to a blank wall. The only way to access the second floor door was by the ladder hanging cock-eyed, half swinging down on rusty hinges, designed to be lowered, allowing the occupants to reach the ground safely in the event of fire; or protecting them from criminals about to perpetrate burglary; or vandalism. The door, on closer inspection, also worse for wear, without window or handle, hanging slightly ajar, gave way to a flight of stairs rising up through a flat black painted stairwell, just the width of the tread itself, the only apparent light ahead being the small ring glowing behind the plastic cover of a door bell. And another door.

The bell-push, made of plastic, perhaps three-eighths of an inch in diameter, was, as you might expect in a dream sequence, embossed in neat black letters with the instruction **PRESS**, the execution of which didn't discharge sound from the ancient apparatus. Pushing at the door, creaking ajar, revealed a spacious open loft, with no windows on the cleaned brick walls. A tinted skylight angled down, motes dancing in the vague slice of light as black as darkness. Standing in the brightness of the shadows a full size English snooker table, just on the edge of the slice of light, shadowed by its overhead lamp.

Past the edge of darkness standing in the corner's brilliant shadows, the man, dressed entirely in black, was tall – as was his companion – his skin translucent, white to such a degree that it appeared to have no colouring. His head shaven. His companion, six feet at least, was a black woman with the skin of an African, so black that all the light is absorbed; dressed entirely in white. A pair of art mannequins. He, the head and hands luminous and she, invisible in the weird changing light of the corner

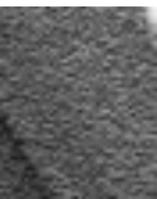
they occupied, as though transformed into the room's crepuscular shadows, only her tightly fitting jumpsuit and eyes visible.

Pannonica my dear, show our guest to the comfortable chair. Humph, no more than a puff of smoke, sat at an upright grand piano that had passed unnoticed in the encompassing blue sphere. Hat, beard, tinted glass bamboo-framed glasses. Let's crepescule with Nellie.

Hurrying back toward the street, turning, looking over his shoulder, there's nothing to see, just a dirty deserted alleyway, the far end the double-doored entrance of an abandoned Chinese laundry, the only action, disturbed dust dancing in a solitary sunbeam. Mocking him. Hours have passed, the sun moved around to the west, glaring up off the street of the run-down downtown neighbourhood, blinding, causing him to pause in the doorway until his aspheric photochromatic lenses catch up with the change of light.

There, at the curb, is a young lady exiting a yellow Ferrari, the driver invisible behind the car's sun splashed windows. She can't be more

than a teenager, her school uniform out of some past private-school fantasy; black tights disappearing up a tartan miniskirt, white shirt with a striped tie just visible in the V-neck of her black, monogrammed, sweater. A large, heavy looking leather satchel is slung over her left shoulder. She seems to be whistling Let's Cool One, sounding as an incongruous mixture of dissonant notes, the swing slightly off-kilter.



Whispered rumours of seeing a clandestine W ghostly figure circumnavigating outside the estate's walls are circulating among the residents, telegraphing [so it's said] bellicose propaganda; raucous and violent music [so it's said] from an old-fashioned transmitter; that there are still independent thinkers, residents who still own and operate illegal receivers, hidden away [so it's said] among the rubbish stored in their basements. Electrically powered tuning devices with antennas and dials, capable of retrieving signals from beyond the walls. An instrument that some can vaguely remember from their youth.

The guards are picking up the signals on their walkie-talkies, a hand-held, portable, two-way radio transceiver.

Note: The walkie-talkie was developed during the Second World War and has been variously credited to Donald L. Hings, radio engineer Alfred J. Gross, and engineering teams at Motorola. Similar designs were created for other armed forces, and after the war, walkie-talkies

spread to public safety and eventually commercial and job site work. Major characteristics include a half-duplex channel (only one radio transmits at a time, though any number can listen) and a “push-to-talk” (PTT) switch that starts transmission. Typical walkie-talkies resemble a telephone handset, possibly slightly larger but still a single unit, with an antenna sticking out of the top. Where a phone’s earpiece is only loud enough to be heard by the user, a walkie-talkie’s built-in speaker can be heard by the user and those in the user’s immediate vicinity. Hand-held transceivers may be used to communicate between each other, or to vehicle-mounted or base stations. ^[1]

I've had about enough of you, Swainswick Twerton spluttered, As of now we are never ever going to speak again. To each other he meant; clarity not being one of his stronger points. Fuck you, man, you only like those who say you're great. Thirty years ago now, that was, October 10th, 2010 – Thelonious's 93rd birthday – and still among the negatives bubbling up in memory. Pity really, such a waste of time, false emotion. Artificial outrage. Babble-on repetition, inconsequential history revisited. What a waste.

Swainswick always had idealistic confusion whirling about in his head, paranoid conspiracy theories some would have said, but his thoughts about the future of the Internet, that it would eventually be filled with rubbish, much the same as television, would be controlled by the military industrial complex, did come about. So-called social networks were even more insidious, eventually using up all the available airwaves, clogging them up with mediocre bullshit, all this useless information floating about in the ionosphere infecting people's brains, their hearing, cancerous growths,

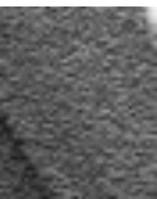
information collected by a department of the Chinese and Indian governments, catalogued for future control of capitalistic enterprises, enabling their manufacturing plants to higher productivity.

He'd been an inventor of sorts, always one step behind the outside world, obsolete before he even began, ignoring the advice of the young, knowing as he did that they knew fuck-all about what was going on. Unintentionally training himself to misunderstand just about everything, misinterpretation a quality.

He was the only visitor that Farrington ever saw, taking the secret pin code to access his pension fund, using the cash to purchase non-perishable tinned goods – beans, sardines, evaporated milk and the like, rowing over once a month on delivery. He rarely saw Farrington, who at the approach of anyone, would disappear up into the woods, hide away. Left in a box, outside of the crumbling house, would sometimes be books, tapes and CDs, to be taken and sold for cash in town, added to the meagre senior's benefits to compensate for the skyrocketing prices.

Farrington was unaware that entertainment no longer existed in these forms, that except for the weird secret collectors, were either unknown or considered dinosauric relics. Books, replaced, electronically downloaded and music listened to on portable media players clipped to the kids' belts, skinny wires transmitting sound to ear plugs.

Pensions, still intact for those who claimed it before the fall of the publicly-funded health care system, are paid directly into electronic double entry accounts of government operated financial institutions. Microchip implants are required in the urban centres, the machines accessed through iris recognition systems, a method of biometric authentication that uses pattern recognition techniques, high resolution images of the individuals' eyes.



His mate Swainswick, fancying himself a bit of a pundit, has assured him that nothing could possibly go medically wrong in his dotage, that he'd be protected by all the beer he'd quaffed, that it had created a protective layer, filled his body up with yeasty antibodies. So a visit to a dermatologist seemed innocent enough, just some ointment to slather on his aging skin would do it. But look what's gone and happened, just before his seventy-second Christmas.

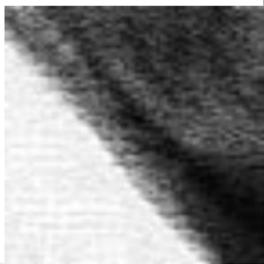
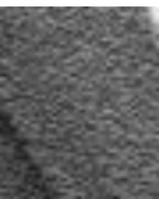
Themba, an elderly South African lady friend, had warned Farrington about the strangeness of Cedric D'Aspora; his casual manner. A bit scary, she'd said, glad to have a nurse in attendance. Sitting there waiting he can't help noticing the large framed photograph of Charles Mingus nonchalantly caressing his concert bass, and the calendar above the desk, open at the month of November, is illustrated with a David Stone Martin drawing of Charlie Parker: The Magnificent Charlie Parker on Clef Records.

The white-coated doctor is a large black guy, six feet tall at least, with a wobbly right

eye, quite an oddball, breezing in without a word of greeting. Take your clothes off and sit up there, he says. Up on the padded examination bed to be inspected from head to foot, Cedric scrutinising, with his good eye, through an oversized square illuminated magnifying glass. Let's see what you've been referred to me for, he says. Peering intently, his weird eye enlarged, he catalogues the yeast stained, liver spotted skin: You're just old, he say's, and this is tinea versicolour, a cream applied daily will take care of that. Huh, huh, looks like basal cell carcinoma. BCC. Cancer in the ear – Kenneth Bruce Gorelick disease. Farrington knew he should have never listened to all that jazz, ruining not only his brain, social life, and style of dress, it has now infected his left ear, the infection advanced enough that Cedric picks up the phone and schedules him for surgery, right off, just like that. Well not right off exactly, there's to be a wait of six months before he can get on the list of the specialist down in the metropolis.

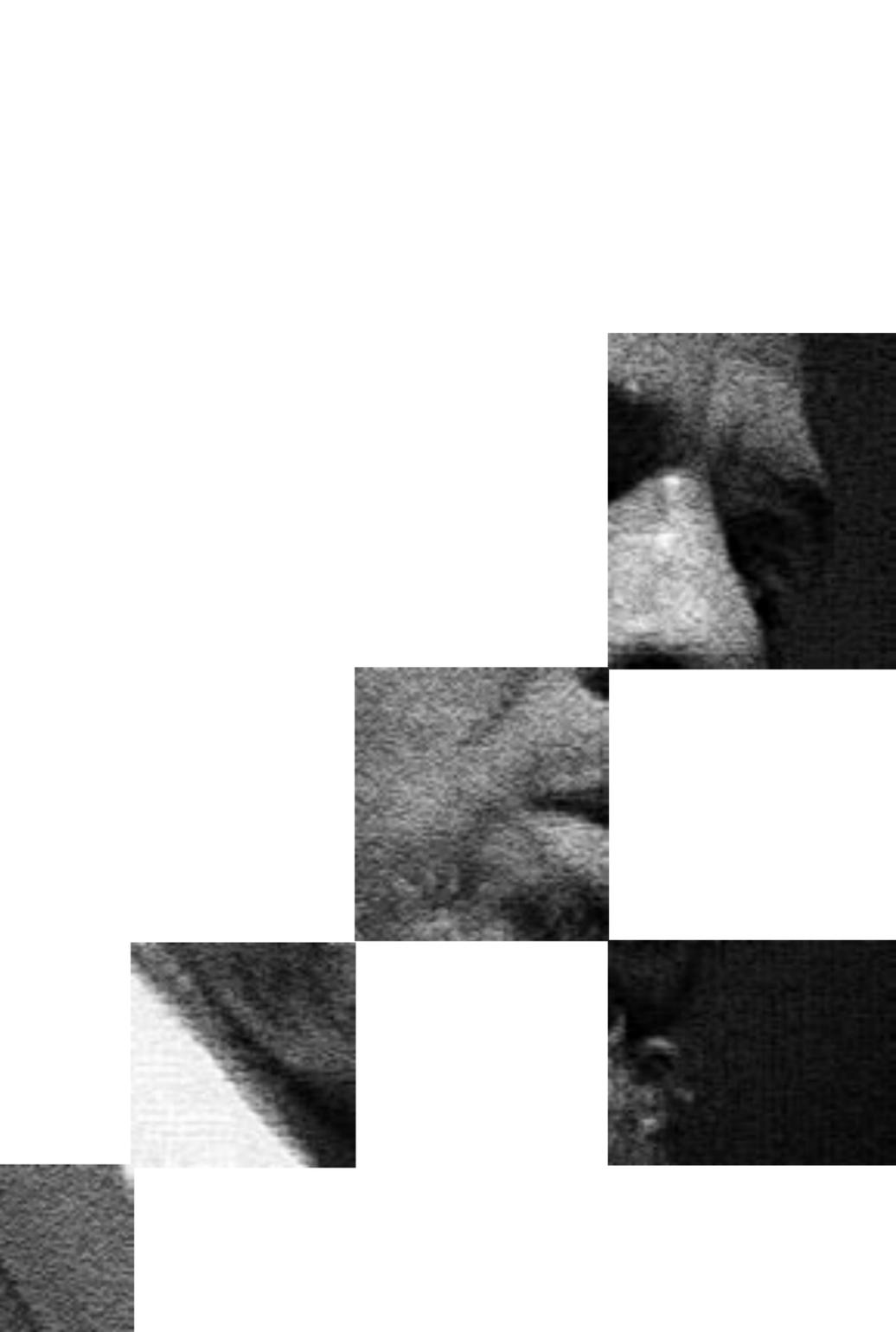
So it says on your medical history form that you're a photojournalist. A newspaper writer?

I hope you're not one of them loonies writing bullshit propaganda about that Palin woman. Nope, says Farrington, music was my specialty, I was the editor of a jazz magazine. Last year I won a lifetime achievement award for my contributions. That so, says Cedric, well Charlie Parker, when he was a young man, roomed at my auntie's house down there in Kansas City.



Ashley has never before seen a radio, has not the faintest idea of its purpose. Idly turning the grungy object around in her hands, she wonders what this black and silver box could be, how the row of square buttons along the top, each with a different coloured symbol, function; what the telescopic hinged rod does, the long display window at the front with rows of numbers and a horizontal cursor moved by a rotatable knurled knob stuck on the end, signify. Attached to the sides is a hinged carrying handle. At the front a small hinged compartment through whose window can be seen two small knobs. Attached to the back is a sealed plastic bag, its contents obscured by the years of abandonment, which when opened reveals a begrimed, unreadable booklet headed Operating Manual.

The smells, textures, shapes, are alien to Ashley, living as she does in a world of products manufactured from various brightly coloured synthetic polymers. Among the treasures she has discovered, in a trunk hidden away in a spider-webbed nook, is a tatty leather satchel, into which, along with the diary and dictionary, she places the radio. For future examining.



Leaving the glare of the Whitsuntide noon-day sun, entering De Kroeg's dormant caliginous space, a patchwork of subtle shadows, only the faint twinkle highlighting the bottles of genever lining the shelf behind the bar provides enough light for the engraved mirror, advertising **Grolsch • Sinds 1615 • Vakmanschap 's Meesterschap**, to reflect an image of the lone occupant, a thick set man with close cropped hair, droopy moustache, stubbly beard, his conservative attire blending with the room's sober atmosphere, belying the true identity of the wearer. Stay for a cold beer. Why not. Farrington has wandered over early, sussing out the venue for that evening's performance, not expecting anyone to be there. Brötz, as he turns out to be, is looking for company. The beginning of a beautiful friendship.

In this period – the latter half of the seventies – the music of Albert Ayler fills their hearts, and although not entirely clear at that time, Albert had already infiltrated Brötz's saxophone language; that same raw energy. Brötz would, with aging, attain a great lyrical and rhythmic beauty. And there they are again,

thirty-four years on, no longer hanging out in bars, although Brötz is still puffing away on a fat Cohiba Esplendido cigar, not prepared to abandon all his unhealthy addictions. With two youngsters, barely able to match his exuberance, he's the opening act of the jazz festival, coincidentally happening the day after Farrington's surgical procedure, the digging out of the cancerous growth from the concha, the entrance to his auditory canal. Brötz greets him with a bear hug. Old chums. The sound man's fucking deaf, he says. What else is new.

Clinics these days don't smell of chemical disinfectant, and except for the noisy elevator to the second floor, there's a subdued sterile atmosphere. Muted tones. A handful of day surgery patients, patiently waiting their turn, skimming through the piles of outdated glossy magazines, suitable mostly for women readers; *Chatelaine* and *Family Circle* prominent on the piles, *Sports Illustrated* for the macho, two local weeklies and *Country Life* and *Better Homes and Gardens* for those wishing they were someone else. Two tiny, cute, oriental looking young ladies stand guard over the re-

ception desk, scrutinising the compulsory admission forms. The five victims, waiting to be buzzed through into the interior waiting room, are hoping for a coffee machine and doughnuts on the other side. Two women. Three men. All from somewhere else. Out-of-towners. All patients forwarded from Cedric D'Aspora.

This is only the second time in his life Farrington has had a surgical procedure, the first a vasectomy at the age of fifty, at that time of life thinking he'd already brought enough babies into the world. Avoiding doctors like the plague. Laying there on the examination couch, waiting for the topical anaesthetic to numb his ear, terrible thoughts begin to creep into his brain. It didn't boost his confidence when he heard the surgeon addressed as Doctor Vinnie Vango, the prints decorating the walls of the surgery reproductions of the sunflowers at Arles, as though the old lead eater himself was present. Luckily no self-portrait with bandaged ear. The preparation nurse is charming, asking questions in her smoky, foreign, Hollywood voice; preparing him for the ordeal ahead. Off to the side, out of sight, another one

asks: Any allergies? Absolutely zero tolerance to pain, quips Farrington, desperately attempting to keep his cool. He cannot feel anything, no discomfort, hearing only a faint scratching sound travelling down his canal. And a nauseous stench, his olfactory sense overwhelmed as his ear is cauterised following the biopsies. Billie materializing into his fear...

*Scent of magnolias, sweet and fresh,
Then the sudden smell of burning flesh. ^[2]*

They've all gone now, the elderly and infirm, buggered off to secure, geriatric residences with all the modern conveniences, the night nurse always on duty, close by a hospital. Or dead. Gradually, now that individuality is frowned upon, illegal some would say, the old ways dissipated, with few exceptions everyone has left for the urban centres, only the languishing back-to-the-earth gang, so-called artists, independent farmers unwilling to retire, elders whose life these islands are, remain. Just Farrington is left up there at the top of the overgrown lane, where he sits and dreams, waiting for the long awaited end. He's almost inaccessible as the natural foliage has completely overgrown the unattended island. A narrow laneway has been kept clear by his friend Swainswick Twerton on his monthly visits.

No one would recognise Farrington these days, skinny, almost skeletal, his shabby clothing hanging about his spare frame, his hair and beard out of control, the razor blades long ago run out. He's become just like that bloke Robinson Crusoe in that book by Daniel Defoe,

stranded on the Island of Despair, though not quite so remote, and unlikely that he's visited by cannibals looking for a meal. He still has his tatty copy of Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*, hoarding it as though there's some intrinsic value hidden away in the pages, confusing his reality with socialist ideology, hallucinating, imagining that he has beaten them all, that his labour will never be exploited by capitalists for profit. He vaguely remembers that somewhere among the three hundred and fifty-odd pages of Marx's analysis of Defoe's story, that Crusoe's experiences on his island represent the inherent economic value of labour over capital, observing that the salvaged money brought from the ship is worthless when compared to his tools. Farrington's mind now a fragile bewildering puzzle.

Tenor saxophone had been Farrington's first choice: Prez, Bean, Big Ben, all breathing subtle innuendo into trite popular songs penned by Americanised Jews, adding another personality through their brilliant improvisations, just the songs' structure, in the end, of any consequence. But it was not to be, his internal phonation higher pitched, an octave up, although you wouldn't know it from his voice. The slur though, that was already there, just enough to detect a homeland. Associating himself with this greatness was not enough, his heritage, very birthplace contradicting. Schlucks Pingouin, his first real teacher, had discovered it. Up an octave he'd said, Up there among the raucous holler of New Orleans, Sidney Bechet the original grand master; but even that was too much, too studied and too far south in the way of things.

He'd never contributed anything of consequence, never had an original thought, so there was no need for him to be so upset, indignant at his then wife's insistence that he was a nobody. She could have kept that opinion to herself, might have extended their marriage a few more years.

One night they were driving east along Crosstown Boulevard in the old Peugeot 404 station wagon, a harvest moon hanging over a viaduct, a giant orange glowing orb as though an entrance to another world. When out of the radio – back then jazz was broadcast over the airwaves on a regular basis, Welman on the CBC most likely – came Bean and Big Ben appropriately pouring forth Shine on Harvest Moon, that old standard. The rhythm section led by the mighty Oscar of Canadian content fame. That was when she said he was a nobody, borrowing, taking advantage of the city's conservatism to further his useless self. Could've been true when viewed in retrospect, he'd certainly had no training in the arts. A confidence trickster at best. So shine on, shine on harvest moon...

Later, much later, Trane is the dominant force, taking that standard fare to new heights, spinning phantasmagorical soprano'd tales – travelling to far-off India. Though Ornette was Farrington's preference, the something else melodies of an angel's voice wondering when the blues would leave, visiting Bird in

Klactoveedsedstene, searching for tomorrow's question among all those lonely women – just ramblin'. Or Jimmy floating laconically atop Cecil's angry black density, opening paths of enlightenment through the cluster, excursions on wobbly rails. He imagined himself part of all this as he developed what a friendly Canadian critic once described as fashioning a modest conversational free improvisatory style that finds generally lyrical median between his American and European influences. He even dedicated one of his simplistic tunes – Up a Love Song for Captain Robot – to Steven Norman Lackritz, another of his heroes, whose own compositions – Dreams, Moon, Flakes, Scraps, Trickle – are brief encounters, reductionistic, nursery rhymes filled with hidden meaning. And on it goes...

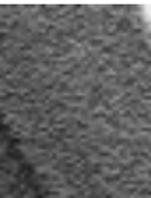
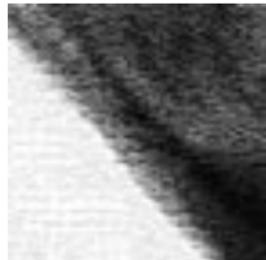
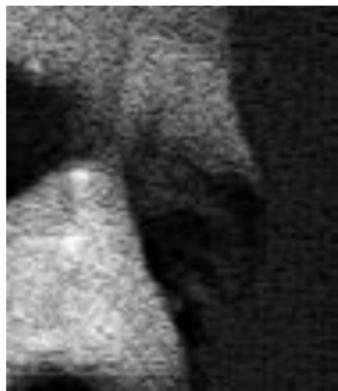
His only hope was simulation, but even with that he imagined himself more important, this aligning himself with genius not only musical, but stealing the ideas generated by writers, superficially absorbing, extending the pastiche that composed his life. That the cut-up ideology popularised by William Burroughs,

that he'd borrowed from Tristan Tzara, a prominent dadaist who created on-the-spot poems by pulling words at random from a hat, was a message Farrington could also appropriate. The intention being to embellish further his false reputation, altering his observed reality. Pastiche sounds just right: a musical composition consisting of a series of songs or other musical pieces from various sources.

*Oh, Shine on, shine on, harvest moon
Up in the sky;
I ain't had no lovin'
Since January, February, June or July.
Snow time ain't no time to stay
Outdoors and spoon;
So shine on, shine on, harvest moon,
For me and my gal. ^[3]*

Truth is, understanding art was often outside of Farrington's realm of knowledge. Mostly he liked the pieces hanging on his walls to be recognisable, created by a comrade, the comfort of being surrounded by ghost memories, the times they all had together; or bought on

a whim at one of the community art shows. Not shows controlled by the art police, bureaucratic careful taste; or as was often the case, by perfumed trollops in outdated designer clothes specialising in public relations. Mostly, for Farrington, the highlight of a visit to an art gallery was its classy restaurant; the one at the National Gallery in Trafalgar Square a special favourite; an exhibition featuring impressionist painting, especially Monet and Pissarro, later on a Seurat picnic, or on occasion a good showing of monochromatic street photography would do it. Sonny LeSemeur, so dear to him, was beyond judgemental art hogwash, a jewel among the weekend painters that the island offered up. The local joke, personal and selective, was when tourons said they'd heard the island was resplendent with artists, Farrington would reply: Yes, true, I know all six of them.



Travelling there, up the flat featureless highway, there's field after field of genetically modified crops, a derelict landscape devoid of humans, the every-now-and-then high walls blending in, ostentatious signboards identifying the gated communities: Eagles Rest, Carriage Park, Seabreeze Sanctuary, Horizon's End, Breezy Hills, Vintage Creek; echoing the drivel conjured up by the same intellectually impoverished planners who had created the street designations in Ashley's colony, all named after famous, long dead, once popular composers, antiquated personalities that nobody knows or cares about: Bacharach Boulevard, Hamlich Heights, Lloyd Webber Way, Lombardo Lane, Mancini Court, Manilow Square, Alpert Avenue...

Inside the compound the constantly searching CCTV cameras – surveillance for the residents' protection against the dispossessed, nomadic bag people foraging for nourishment, lodging, tradable merchandise – are scanning, identifying the denizens, receiving information from the chips embedded in their identification bracelets designed to replicate fashionable

jewellery; non-threatening. Algorithmically registered personal data, interconnected with face recognition, computer catalogued.

Her boy's an impediment, clinging to mummy's leg like a randy unfledged puppy, not yet familiar with Farrington, not yet ready to add another father to his agendum. They're stuck there on the family island, one in a thousand, a big rock at best – the gateway to these islands – hidden just around the edge of other, larger, inhabited rocks, accessed with an aluminium boat, the noisy outboard motor amplifying Farrington's aquaphobic anxieties, the sloshing water settling uncomfortably about his person, dampening the case of his cherished soprano saxophone. This is a rare chance, this visit, before the icy chill of a St. Lawrence River winter sets in, and he's only agreed to participate in what he considers an ordeal because he'd never been there before, always hearing stories, family dinners, continuous Monopoly championships, seeing the pictures of her, a naked young woman frolicking in the freezing water. A brief stop-off before they continue on to Ottawa.

Ramblin' would be best how to describe the house, all porches and angles, shuttered windows, red painted wooden siding exterior

walls; and inside an inefficient giant open-grate rough-hewn stone fireplace – dug up from the very rock the house rests on – that even when roaring cannot project a puff of warmth into the chill. Facing, across the room, sits an unattended upright piano, the uncontrolled temperatures creating a personal tuning within its elderly frame. Something quite to Farrington's liking. The top cover piled high with a weird conglomeration of sheet music – sing-a-long songs, an odd popular classic. No telephone though, or electricity! A short draughty passageway segueing off another porch joins the house to the kitchen, open to the night, attracting numerous bats that call this island their own. Zooming about in that jerky manner they have, personalised rhythm-a-ning. They make the squeamish Mister Gurney nervous, nervous enough that he's inspired to compose a short cheerful ditty to waylay the fears, the superstition of legends, the symbol of the night and its foreboding nature: fictional characters from that darkness – shape-shifting vampires; the Cherokee and Apache knowing that it is a trickster spirit – devilish, infiltrating his

very soul; entangling themselves in his over-long hair as an old wives' tale unfolds. Truths known to Bram Stoker.

This family is strangely obsessed by bats. Crooked wooden shelves lined with musty books, some old enough to be leather bound, display a prominent selection dedicated to bats: Comparative Neurobiology in Chiroptera, Brain Characteristics in Functional Systems; Ecoethological Adaptation, Adaptive Radiation and Evolution Volume 3; Bats, Biology and Behaviour; Listening in the Dark, The Acoustic Orientation of Bats and Men; and besides, impregnating their children's noggins with Bats In The Library...

*Another inky evening's here—
the air is cool and calm and clear.
Can it be true? Oh, can it be?
Yes! Bat Night at the library! ^[4]*

And a whole collection of fiction, darkly illustrated books where, as the synopsis explains:

...that long before the first migration,

there raged a Great Battle Between the Birds and the Beasts. This was fought to establish the balance of nature and the territorial limits of every species. The bats, being neither birds nor beasts, would not choose sides in the conflict. For this, a law was passed that forever condemned the bats to darkness. One young bat, Shade Silverwing, dared to break the law. ^[5]

Silverwing's companions are named Goth, Throbb, Bathsheba, Brutus, Todd [yeah really!], Romulus and Remus... What manner of parents are these that allow such darkness to surround their family? And up on the mantelpiece, above the ineffectual fireplace, in a position of reverence, a bat puppet from the House of Cain. Weird don't you think!

They looked like toys from another world, up there on the screen, nothing familiar to Ashley. She'd only stumbled across them after searching <http://PRC.zedong/mao.commie's> History Channel for ancient British legends, attempting to find some reason why Rupert 'Chummy' Fanshaw should be mentioned in her grandfather's diary. Leading her to another mystery. These funny looking cars, bright coloured, a wind-up handle at the front – just like the tin replicas that she'd seen in the glass cases at the Toy Museum, visited on a rare journey into the disintegrating core of the old city. A racing car driver [so it sez], sat in the middle of the car, his head – covered with a leather aviator's hat that she'd seen in the monochromatic war films – cocked slightly to one side, tinted goggles covering his eyes, the number 18 prominent on the very front of the strange vehicle. In the background a rough stone archway gives way to a walled promenade lined with people, too out-of-focus to see anyone in detail. Cheering though.

Ashley has never ridden in a car, all the transport being operated by the Ministry of

Conveyance, running at strict hours with few destinations of interest to a teenage girl. Mister Fanshaw seems to be racing in a Maserati 8CM-3011 for Team Straight at the 1934 Monaco Grand Prix in Monte Carlo with his friend Hugh Hamilton. They seem to be something of a success, victorious [so it sez] at the Donnington Trophy race, the Brooklands mountain race and the handicap South African Grand Prix. They came first and second (which one which is unclear) at the Albi Grand Prix. A short lived fame. Tragedy strikes when Hamilton crashes into a tree on the last lap of the Swiss Grand Prix. Fatally.

Fowler's old dictionary, being an English edition, doesn't particularise what she's looking for, but a Web search, mostly restricted knowledge, does come up with an explanation for the combination of words Grand Prix – words of French origin: 1863, from Fr., lit. great prize, originally in ref. to the Grand Prix de Paris, international horse race for three-year-olds, run every June beginning at Longchamp in 1863.

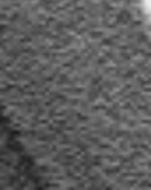
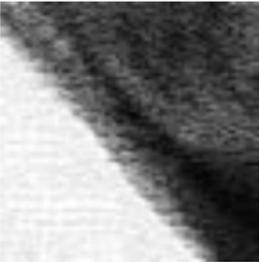
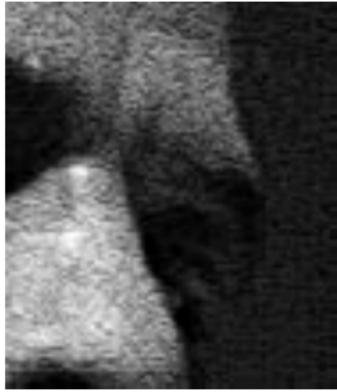
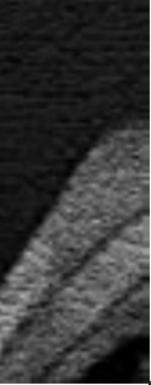
or...

Noun

1. a. *any of a series of formula motor races held to determine the annual Drivers' World Championship*

1. b. *(as modifier): a Grand Prix car*

2. *a very important competitive event in various other sports, such as athletics and snooker*



Aztec West's presence barely registers, a faint swish of rubber on the dusty path, no sound immediately obvious, the signals coming from his transmitter a secret language sent out to a chosen few tuned in to the FM air waves – personal listening devices being obsolete, illegal, the bland allowable music controlled by the Ministry of Sociability broadcast from speakers concealed in the ceilings of public places: malls, corridors, government offices, the few remaining shopping streets in the larger cities. The music of Monk, Mingus, Miles, Trane, Ornette, Hendrix, Zappa, Beefheart... thunders into headphones invisible beneath the black balaclava that swathes Aztec's head, a foundation for the Jason hockey mask and wraparound night-vision goggles. Head to foot he's sheathed in a hooded black spandex suit, steel toe-capped lace-up bovine boots and black leather fingerless driving gloves. The flat-black painted bicycle is high tech, a Hanebrink Electric All-Terrain model, the generated electricity syphoned off to power the 1/2 watt transmitter nestled in the pannier behind the seat. Enough energy to send the out-

lawed music over the wall into the sterility of the Baroque Bluffs compound. The gate keepers are flummoxed by his rapid passings, taken by surprise every time he whooshes out of the blackness, their vast vocabulary of scatological expletives falling on deafened ears. Round and round he goes, every night, sending out signals, the music of ghosts, communicating their spirits to anyone with the ability to hear the messages, signals overpowering the mediocrity, rebelling against the two chords E and G. Old tone centres resurrected – C# and B. See sharp and be natural. Flux the Flux...

As good as memory can recall, it were back in October '89, Saturday the fourteenth, when Sonny LeSemeur's piece, comprised of glass, plastic fresnel lens, instamatic photos, fluorescent light fixtures, silicone and aluminium – a bunch of stuff – was exhibited at the First Biennial of Contemporary Canadian Art at the National Gallery in Ottawa. A back-to-back placement of high-tech optics against generic landscapes photographs, as one art critic would describe it. Not really too brilliant a description, missing the holographic magic of the wall mounted lenses when standing in the perfect spot alongside a pile of logs and blown glass containers, the image revealed.

Farrington never had much truck with the hipsters, the groupies that hung out backstage, lounged against the bar, the music a serious artistic expression, an extension of an as yet unfinished American history. He felt the same about art, most of which he preferred on walls, hung, dimensional. So as he approached the entrance to the gallery, reaching into the inner pocket of his crumpled linen jacket, worn especially on such occasions, for

the pass that Sonny had managed to procure, he felt a tremor of distaste as he pushed his way through the black-apparelled chattering crowd of art-world socialites, party-going smokers, their cloud of noxious fumes filling the alcove. In through silent doors, flashing his invite for the droopy moustached uniformed flunky looking out, bored, through the mirror lenses of his Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses, and up the long concrete ramp – suitable, as architects in those days had an obsessive love of the grey chill pouring. The tall windows, reaching to the sky, flooded the last of the evening light into the Colonnade, its paired columns heaving up into an archwayed steel and glass ceiling, attached to the side of the gallery proper. Arriving into the crowded, facetiously named Grand Hall, decorated as though scenery from a popular fantasy film, arty fake heraldic gonfalons suspended on wires, the inner roof replicating a World War II parachute sale, the silk canopy drooping, limp, rain dripping through the cracks of the ill-fitting structure.

*It is the pervading law of all things
organic & inorganic,
Of all things physical and metaphysical,
Of all things human and all things
super-human,
Of all true manifestations of the head,
Of the heart, of the soul,
That the life is recognizable in its
expression,
That form ever follows function.
This is the law. ^[6]*

And the noise, beg your pardon, art babble, intense, the acoustics ill-considered, replaced by what passes for architectural design, the designer having no sense of acoustics, not musically minded. The evening's entertainment, a country cover band churning out the current hits, plonked among all this chaos, their amplified renditions of Willie Nelson's Nothing I Can Do About It Now, k.d lang's Full Moon Full of Love and I Don't Want to Spoil the Party by Rosanne Cash lost among the manufactured hubbub. Considering the importance of the event the seriously inadequate portable

cash bar could only be described as minuscule, the barman as overworked. Overpriced bottled beer and Ottawa Valley red and white plonk on offer. Unknown to the bartender, filling the glass window behind him, arriving none too slowly, there's a massive orange orb changing the burgeoning night sky.

*Shine on, shine on, harvest moon
Up in the sky...*

Even though Ashley had been programmed as to the dangers that existed out beyond the wall, nothing occupied her mind more than what might be found there, what she would discover out there alone, away from the organised recreation, always controlled by school officials – family planners. Bored with visiting the adjacent mall, the only outlet available, accessed by a guarded linked tunnel, serviced by trendy fashion chain-stores, big-box stores, elitist supermarkets, fake European cappuccino cafes, all unsuitable for her desires, she's desperately in need of adventurous stimulation. Hoping to actualise the whispered rumours of the mysterious cyclist.

SecuriGuard's Rent-a-Cops are lowly souls, unemployable retired police officers and the like, the boredom of gate-keeping assuaged by reading paperback crime novels, watching late night television talk shows, catnapping; filling time, not seriously paying attention. So with her newly acquired leather satchel slung over her shoulder, its precious contents secure, she sets out, having no difficulty sneaking past them, out into the darkness, to find a suitable

cubbyhole and wait for evidence of the infiltrator. The cyclist broadcaster.

Suddenly, magically, he appears, popping up in front of her like Beelzebub, a fallen angel from a paradise lost, almost invisible in his blackness; greeting her, his voice muffled through the mask, roughed with a broad west-country accent:

‘Ello me darlin’.

Her heart is beating like a hammer, her pulse racing like a runaway train.

‘Ow you doin’. Me name be Aztec. What be yerz?

There had been three Nissan X-Trails on the lot, green, red and white, all rental vehicles arrived at their allowable insurable mileage, the white one's mileometer registering the least travelled. Not the most exotic colour, but clean, and with a minimal amount of debate, extras thrown in for the same price: the five-year warranty extended, Weathertech Cargo Liner, all-weather custom floor mats, under-sealing, roof rack, tinted windows, a touch-of-a-button 2WD/4x4/Auto drive mode. What more could a poor boy want? Thanx Mick.

He was into funky that summer. A pensioner purchasing budget priced box sets from Amazon dot. Wow! a 4CD set of 100 Soul Hits - \$19.95. On Special! Martha Reeves and the Vandellas being the standout. Dancing in the Street enough to keep anyone from falling asleep at the wheel. Farrington's not allowed to drive anymore, his mind wandering off into past glories, dreaming of when he first heard Earl Bostic's smooth saxophone rendition of Flamingo. He must have been all of fourteen. A passenger, navigator if your imagination extends to rallying, supposedly interpreting

the four-miles-to-one-inch map, taking them off the already known paths. Out the window there's nothing much more than scenery, lots of trees, uninterrupted mile after mile of greens and browns.

They're trundling through the South Okanagan, the fruit basket of Canada, the pair of them luxuriating in their new Japanese motor, trying it out long distance, looking for a roadside fruit stand, something tasty for lunch. There it is, Skippy's Fruit & Vegetable Market, six posts all in a row, carved cigar store Indians holding up a corrugated roof, a wagon wheel leaning nonchalantly against one of the posts with a hand-painted sign advertising Crafts 'n' Things. Inside a sumptuous locally grown selection. In the forecourt there's a bin choc full of paperback books, 25¢-a-pop, all the proceeds going to local charity.

As David Foster Wallace has said – fictionists who tell the truth aren't allowed to use real names; but why not, when no harm's intended, just a clarification of circumstance. It's the title that catches him really, *Off Minor* – not expecting *Thelonious* to be travelling this far

afield, a detective story introducing him to the jazz loving Detective Inspector Charlie Resnick. Here comes cool blues out of the shadows. John Harvey the writer, unfamiliar, but what the hell, 25¢ worth of off minor.

He's discovering yet one more branch of jazz, not a hipster dialogue, instead the experience resonating, enough for investigation, find out who this bloke is, what's to be revealed. It turns out to be the short stories that grab him, twist his heart, longing, the intimacy of shared times, clubs in London's lost past mentally resurrected. Saturday nights downtown, downstairs at the Marquee, Ronnie's in the heart of Soho. Sunday lunchtimes at the Bull's Head, Albert pulling a splendid pint of bitter. First off Now's the Time, Bird resonating among the smudged inked titles. Later on A Darker Shade of Blue with friends at the bottom of page 280 – a wedding band, imagined of course, with Harry Klein on baritone, tenorist Bert Mellonova, who lives up north, sells organs for a living – electric ones that is; an old mate from back home who's found his way out west; and Bill LeSage, a neighbour

from Carlton Road in Ealing, riding together in his car, another Sunday lunchtime, to the Tally Ho over in Kentish Town, a gig with Tommy Whittle. Back at the Bull's Head, many years later, hanging out with new jazz friends, there's Bill still boppin' away on the vibes, and fuck, Ronnie Verrell is the drummer. Same suit, hip shirt cuffs just showing the gold links, tie relaxed just a tad, so cool, brushes whisking effortlessly. No sweat!

Baroque Bluffs has been constructed over a long forgotten storm drain system running west from the nearby village of Klactoveedsedstene – the home of Aztec West, passing all the way beneath the compound, skirting the borders of the rose gardens, below the wall, across deserted fields, under the old highway, to the escarpment that Baroque Bluffs is named after, where the water overflow, in the days before global warming, waterfalled out into the seaway. Every 400 metres an overgrown archway, a tangle of brambles obscuring the entrances, gives access to the tunnel down a rusting staircase, revealing the engineering genius of Victorians, the brick lined horseshoe shaped culvert taller than a man, the flat bottom making a suitable pavement for Aztec to pedal along, able to surface, at any of the archways, unobserved.

The few villages that remain, isolated, access roads crumbled, deteriorated beyond use, are home to the artists, their threat of originality removed from the mainstream so they cannot influence the privileged populace; disconnected, self contained, their residences

quarried stone cottages, food allotments supplying nourishment, wind generated power, living in a world beyond imagination, using the tunnels as a means of movement, unhindered, undisclosed. The system now revealed to Ashley Down.

Bloody 'ell a radio. Where'd you get ee then?

Farrington's memories are fading like the bleached colours on the illustrated menu cards in the sun-bombarded windows of Chinese restaurants on the north side of any street. Many shades of pale blue. Washed out. But back then, back in the day, he could be just about anywhere; leaning against the bar in an unfamiliar pub, a streetcar journey trundling out to the west end to hang out in a Portuguese pool room, shoot some frames; waiting impatiently in an airport security zone. Recognised. His voice, that radio voice penetrating, the boastful sticker covered soprano case, or just himself, although visually he worked continually with disguise, ranging extreme. Shaven clean – head, face, even eyebrows, or long ponytailed hair and beard, the hippy look, easier done, these rapid transformations when hair sprouted from every which-where. Some punter, over his shoulder, would say – Hey man, I know you. An instant friend. Now, as Bristol Boy once said, His roots are in his record player – his life little more than wisps of philosophical generalising.

He's retired, bored with life, an antiquated legend. Maybe there's a young underground seeking him out, needing a leader for their rebellious cause. Jazz, the music in which his doubtful legend lies, is now considered the most evil form, history repeating, said to be performed by miscreants. Never ever heard in these times, publicly. Improvisation, of any genre, prohibited under government law. Only songs in the keys of G and E allowed, the lyrics monitored, proclaiming allegiance to the Party. Strictly Enforced. Ambient Hits Inc. is the most popular form of entertainment, elevator music elevated to the temples and shrines of the new cultureless hoards. Heard everywhere: shopping malls, telephone callers on hold, cruise ships, airports, doctors' and dentists' offices, smooth easy listening. Smooth. Pointless. The official government radio station, operated by the Corporate Business Council (CBC), has destroyed all evidence of the past.

Out into the darkness she went, 'round midnight, past the slumbering gate keepers, for her nightly rendezvous with Aztec. Revelations: the joyous noise, emitting from her newly discovered radio, powered by a rechargeable lithium battery; compact discs promulgating the wonders of jazz, the unknown music of Miles Davis, Charles Mingus, John Coltrane, their unfamiliar sounds exciting her, rhythms beyond her body's expectations. But it was Thelonious Sphere Monk that caught her in his spell. Off-kilter; the answer, another question.

Sitting in the comfort of an abandoned gardener's shed, out of sight among the tangle, her education begins, what he's really up to on his nightly circling, how all this old-fashioned stuff works. It be a battery see, a lithium-ion battery. You can recharge it, fill it back up with energy, you can, like, use the radio for receivin', you'll be able to hear the music I do broadcast every night. See, the ions moves from the negative electrode to the positive one when you do use it, and back again when you do's the recharge. Chemistry eh! And Monk. Bleedin' great eh!

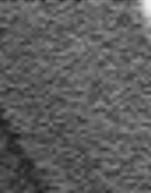
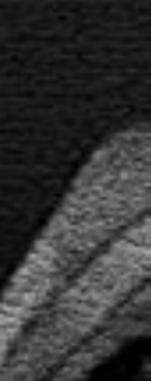
Round and round he goes, every night, broadcasting music from his collection of jazz CDs, Thelonious Monk's Complete Live At The Five Spot – 1958 ^[7] filling her full of unexpected joy, pulling her into another world, one in existence more than seventy years before she was born. The New York City neighbourhood bar, down there in the bohemian East Village is the local hangout of the painters and poets living in the nearby lofts; the brothers Termini giving Monk a residency after he'd been forced into seclusion for not having a New York City Cabaret Card, a police controlling device invented in the years of Prohibition. And the band members: the saxophonists John Coltrane, Johnny Griffin, Ahmed Abdul-Malik on bass, the drumming of Shadow Wilson and Roy Haines, even the great drummer Art Blakey, baritone saxophonist Pepper Adams and trumpeter Donald Byrd making brief appearances. A light blue Monk rhythm-a-ning as he comes on the Hudson, just a gigolo cooling one, waiting for Bud, so the evidence shows. Mysteriosos goings on.

Let's just say it's summer time. Walk on by, easy to miss the entrance if it had not been for the bright colours decorating the otherwise shadowy sentry box occupied by the ticket taker sentinel, another black-suited mystery man – shaven headed, a small gold crucifix earring dangling absurdly from a cauliflower ear – attracting attention. A fellow not to be messed with, guarding the long muralled alleyway – a magnificent zany mural of toothy monsters up there on the wall long before that Banksy stuff, bright colours exaggerated with hashish influenced reckoning – that arrived at the large double-doored entrance. A handful of tables outdoors, just to one side, and up the east wall a staircase leading to a rooftop patio.

Although hardly Broadway, only moderate glitter, 'the street', not more than half a dozen city blocks west of downtown, past the department stores, City Hall with skating rink filled on the soon enough arrival of winter, past the Law School, crossing the widest Avenue, and there you were at the beginning of a stroll; cafes, book and clothing stores, the bars where they were allowed to play their

revolutionary music. Farrington had opened for Cecil Taylor's group here, a string orchestra playing his compositions, music that a local newspaper critic had dubbed elephantine Bartok. His trio sharing an evening program with Jackie Burroughs, a benefit for a political book store, Jackie doing her Mexican schtick, getting prepared for the character of a sun-tanned cougar, all of them upstairs in the grotty artists' room passing the bottle of Tequila. Once with his underage daughter sneaking past the gateman to hear the Tony Williams Quintet – Wallace Roney had a green anodised trumpet; Don Pullen, Leroy Jenkins and Sting – rest their souls; Dollar Brand with Ekaya, hanging out having a fine jazz club time with the likes of Gerri Allen, Charlie Haden and Paul Motian, dancing to Oliver Lake and Jump Up. Now that's the right idea... JUMP UP, Eh! So cool, back then, great spicy food – perhaps inventing the idea of fusion cuisine, mixing the exotic flavours of the Caribbean and Thailand; ice cold Brick Red Baron Premium Blonde Lager to wash it all down. Ah! And all along 'the street' vaguely interconnected halls

of hipness, who was leading or following lost in the wash of history, traipsing along together forming a new society, rebelling against conformity, unrecognised. Down south a couple of blocks to Danny's Subway Room, up north the Chinaman's bar resplendent with another extravagant mural.



Unit Number Six Lombardo Lane is up against the west wall not more than 400 metres from the highway that runs along the escarpment from which the estate acquired its name. The inside surface of the wall is decorated with vines climbing across trompe l'oeil murals mimicking the classic gardens of the Italian Renaissance, the order and beauty of the original, the fountains, statues, grottos, sights, sounds and smells, one dimensional, illustrated by commissioned artists specialising in pleasantly pleasing visuality.

None of the archwayed entrances accessing the dried-out storm drain culvert are inside the perimeter of the wall, no easy exit. On the corner, just out of sight, is Green Chimneys Pump House where all the incoming water is purified before circulating throughout the compound. Not much precipitation these days, global warming drying up large areas about the country, water having become something of a luxury, rationed by the Ministry of Austerity. There are no Rent-a-Cops guarding the pump house, and just as Aztec had visualised, there in the back wall was an unlocked maintenance door

leading to the outside world.

On the afternoon of Friday the thirteenth, a low ceiling of fog has floated in across the escarpment, hanging there, setting everything into outlines, only vaguely discernible. Ashley, squeezing out through the hinged circular portal, sets off across the overgrown allotments, through a scrubby field scattered with abandoned car parts, refrigerators, televisions, computers piled building high, rats, feral cats and dogs scampering among the network of corridors their busy searching journeys have created, eventually scrambling down a steep bank, where she arrives on the shoulder of the almost abandoned highway, the direct route into the old city.

Hitchhiking at her age is without fear, not a care in the world. She checked her lipstick in the plastic compact with the team rodent's logo on its fake tortoise shell cover, and stuck out her thumb just as from out of the blue haze a gleaming yellow Ferrari 275 GTB/4 pulled alongside. The driver's smooth ghostlike alabastrine skin glows, his eyes hidden behind Mont Blanc Aviator Sunglasses, and he's wear-

ing clothes to die for. Such a beautiful man, loose curly hair tumbling to his shoulders, his silk coat embossed with far-eastern symbolism. There's a circular indent in the middle of his lips. His voice, as he opens the door, is a rasping whisper, barely audible. Yo, my name's Freddie, Freddie Freeloader. Jump in. You goin' downtown? On the back seat sits an open instrument case, a flash of green anodised metal catching the corner of her eye.

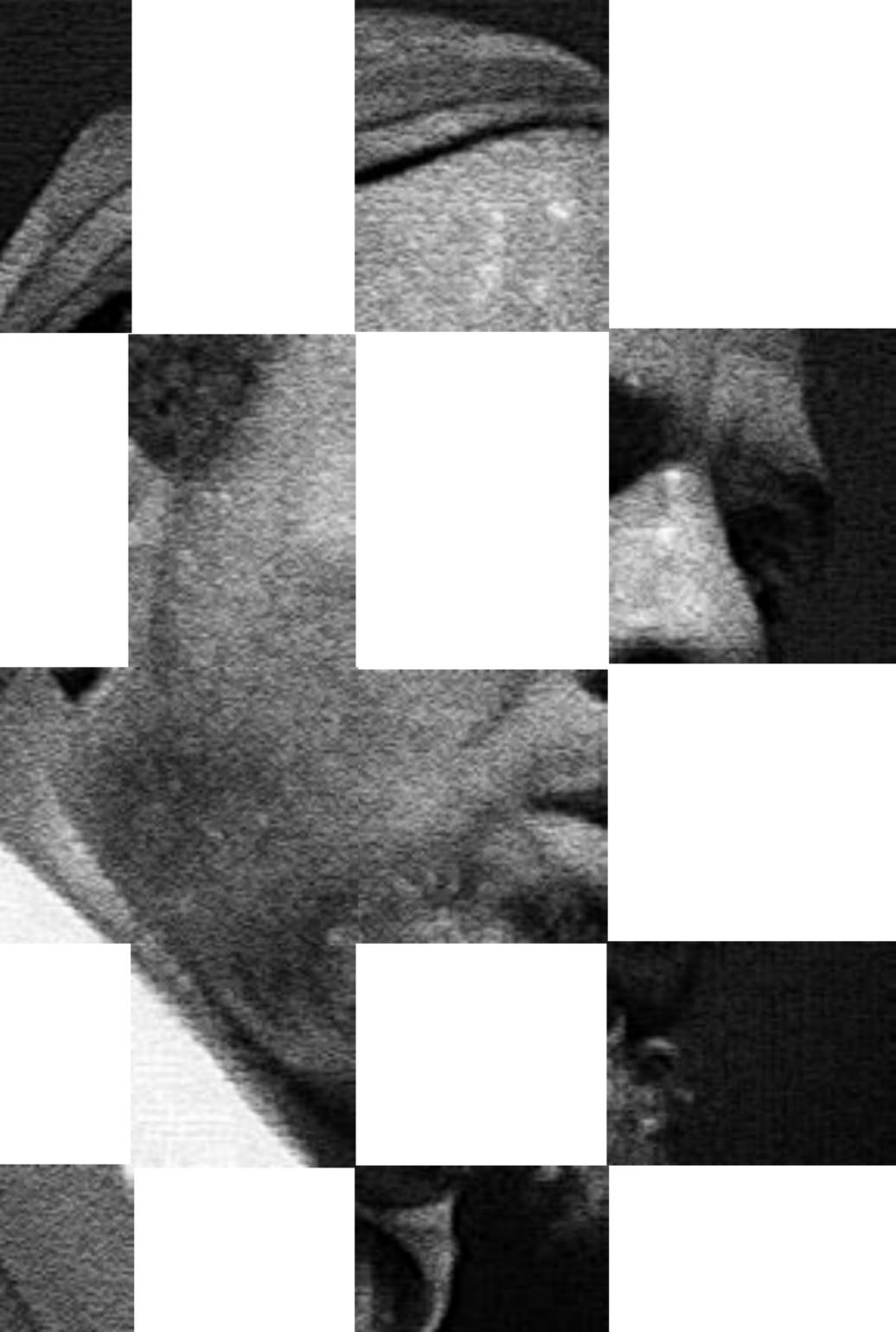
New York, the centre of all his dreams. He'd mystically transmigrated, crossed the Atlantic, so young – barely twenty, just to be in the Big Apple, to be in the chimera of bebop, encouraged in his fantasy by tales of Geraldo's Navy. Must have been the summer, or perhaps the fall of '58 – the mind too elastic, not stiffly centred on fact – that he'd visited New York for the first time. Looking, he was, for the Five Spot, #2 Saint Mark's Place, down there in the East Village, a place he'd read about in *Downbeat Magazine*, a bar considered the mecca of hipness, and the bandleader that night exulted in Farrington's social circle. A Bebop God. A dingy little place considering, not even a cloak room, round wooden tables and chairs crammed together in front of a tiny stage, filled, in his dream, by DeKooning, Pollack, Rothko – abstract expressionists, all regular customers in love with this extraordinary music. He'd tried for free admittance, offering a business card boasting of jazz, but Joe, one of the Termini brothers who owned the place, seemed less than impressed. Lovely, he said, from England are ya? That'll be five bucks. Close to a fortune.

How'd it all begin? The music. Disjointedly ambling seems to fit in Farrington's mind. A Porkpie hat, dark glasses disguising, his wispy beard protruding pharaoh like, ancient knowledge updating this aura of masquerade. At first just himself alone, Just A Gigolo propositioning the slightly out-of-tune piano, then off they went, no introduction, nothing formal; metaphysical, autonomous, independent of jazz etiquette, thinking of the dimensions subtly hanging in a Giorgio De Chirico painting, haunted, brooding moments waiting to be unravelled into peculiar brawny swaggering sonic landscapes. Ah! Those tunes: Light Blue, Coming on the Hudson, Rhythm-a-ning, Round Midnight, In Walked Bud, Let's Cool One, Misterioso... all wrapped up, briefly at the end of each set, with Epistrophy's iambic pentameter.

Hilpertson didn't know as much as he boasted, couldn't envisage this filthy street as what it had once been, seeing only the gutters overflowing with disgusting oozing discharge, all sorts of rubbish strewn about the cracked sidewalks, most of the windows of the abandoned buildings boarded up. There was a time when the street was filled with ersatz hipness created by street sellers selling knock-off African everything: beads, brightly coloured woven hats, dashikis, rubbishy silver jewellery imported from Mexico, illegal street hustlers, musical buskers including the legendary Shuffle Demons. There's one enterprising young couple recording their original songs about 'the street' in situ on a battery operated Sony Superscope 200 cassette tape recorder and selling them to passersby. One playing a beat-up acoustic guitar accompanying his hoarse voice, the other swishing brushes around a telephone directory. Chalkers drawing psilocybin inspired psychedelic scenery, hurrying before the rain came and washed their fragile masterpieces away, sluiced down the drain. Minimally talented beggars, all.

Just west, in what was in those far-off days a Jewish market boasting European bakeries, health food emporiums, coffee retailers, a slew of budget priced clothing stores, a handful of exquisite cheese shops, a pool room at the north end where the Portuguese clientele, always men, lounged on the steps outside dragging on their rollies, round the corner your bicycle repaired while you waited, the usual drug infested park filled full of chattering youth rapping fake Jamaican, and dozens of cafes: Italian, Mexican, Hungarian, Chinese, Jewish, Vietnamese, Indian – East & West... you name it. Today, this late in the century, halfway through, the odd isolated business can be found, almost invisible among the debris. A popular hangout, attracting those not fitting into the scheme of things, is the Maltese Falcon, a secondhand shop trading in merchandise for collectors of nostalgia run by three brothers of London Maltese ancestry: Barton, Clay and Lawrence Hill, descendants of Soho ‘businessmen’, said to all be approaching a century in age, said to have lived here in the market since those long-ago times.

There's difficulty seeing inside, through the grime covered bay window, just clear enough to suss out the crescent shaped window ledge jammed with odds and sods; piles of books, two two-foot high carved cigar store Indians, a velvet painting of the Last Supper with a brown ticket hanging – claiming **Authentic**, a yellow milk crate filled with street signs, cracked painted vases suggesting far off exotic lands, scruffy children's dolls and a variety of brass pots and pans hanging from strings.



Stored away on the shelves of his workshop are hundreds of reel-to-reel and cassette tapes, dissolving, stuck together. Music from tours broadcast on the radio that nobody listened to, or so he was informed by the jazz programmer. They'd received eighteen letters, she'd said, all but one negative, claiming that his music with the German avant garde trombonist was not jazz, not even music to their ears. And how many letters do you usually receive, he'd asked. Well usually two or three – or none. Well then, he'd said, progress. Maude was her name, that much was still there in his retrieval system, a 'jazz fan' who loved chick singers and not much else. If it didn't swing... family values... little wonder serious art evaporated into obscurity.

Farrington, years ago, unpacked the boxes, hundreds of wondrous recorded events, reel-to-reel and cassette, intending at the time to transfer everything, evidencing them, the champions of the new wave, to digital, make them into compact discs so that future generations could resource them, know what had come before, not knowing that all this tech-

nology would be obsolete before the end of his-story. Baking them in a convection oven at a steady temperature of 130 degrees restored the deterioration that had begun through chemical breakdown due to age, shedding, the glue holding the oxide particles on the tape an unstable formulation. Sticky-shed syndrome.

There had been so many tours, rambling from coast to coast, the occasional gig in America, several trips to England and Holland, generating a small reputation as representatives of an obscure art form, working with radical feminist politicians, ban the bomb groups, cabalistic poets, the forefront of the European, English and American free jazz players. On the trips down into New England and upstate New York, the trio's car, a red Russian job, often attracted attention. Once in Poughkeepsie a small group of church ladies had asked to meet with them, worried about communism arriving in their community.

And the German trombonist. That first time, no rehearsals, a chilly October night in the far east, an intimate venue in Quebec City starting off the tour across Canada. The gig is

the night before the Quebec Nordiques hockey team, just integrated into the National Hockey League, are to play their first away game against their dreaded enemies, the Montreal Canadiens. The train leaves the station far too early in the morning, the trio a tad groggy from swilling back, at the gig, numerous glasses of complimentary red plonk. From end to end the train is packed solid with Nordiques fans all geared up in blue and white jerseys. The logo seems to be a clumsy illustration of a blue, white and red woman's high-heeled shoe with a round button on the toe, the hem bordered by a row of large fleurs-de-lis. Even at this time of the morning the fans are already pissed, shouting and hollering in Québécois French, singing bawdy songs, the annoying repetitious chanting of Nordiques Nation. Non-stop for the entire three hour journey. Nowhere on the train is it possible to obliterate the obnoxious racket. Welcome to Canada.

The Nordiques will lose to the Canadiens on that Saturday night, 3-1 against, and naturally enough nobody came to the quartet's avant garde concert, their German guest not

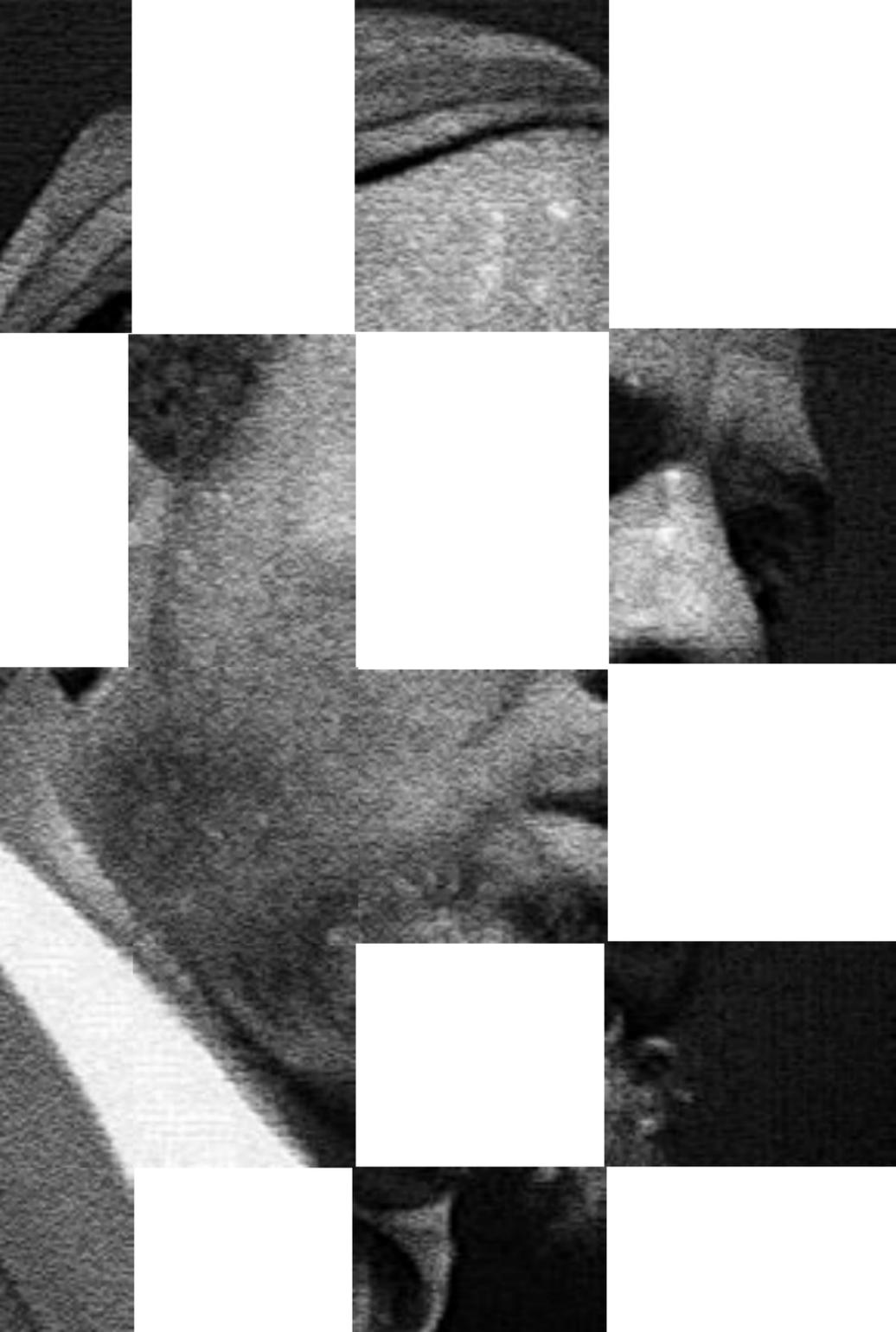
being a commercial attraction. The promoter, a university professor who's not a sports fan, is unaware of the monumental importance of the hockey game, and is convinced that the low attendance – eight all told – is because Dave Brubeck is appearing in Montreal, not the legendary quartet featuring altoist Paul Desmond, instead a group of minor significance, his son playing electric bass. Can you imagine that? Electric bass!

The German trombonist has envisaged, being a European, that they are to cross the country by train, not understanding the magnitude of the journey. Sat around a living room table in Toronto, a map spread out, soon enough clears up his misconception, the distance they have already travelled being roughly the mileage from border to border of his homeland, and the next gig in Winnipeg, to be recorded for the radio, some fourteen hundred miles to the west.

He was a somewhat Chaplin-like character, seeming not to like Farrington's trio much, made asides in broken English as to their ability, as though only Europeans were privileged to

play freely improvised music, a copyright embedded. Their sketchy compositions not to his liking. But let's not stereotype Germans eh! So yeah some of them exude a peculiar arrogance, a bit over the top, too much Deutschland Uber Alles still hanging about on their belt buckles. And he has a total misunderstanding of the Canadian way, thinking that a newspaper labelled 'Free' meant that it was from the political left, and on a solo trombone feature gradually stifled the horn's voice by ramming pages of the paper into the bell, all the time uttering – Ja mein Herr wie haben das Winnipeg Free Press, causing the audience to burst into spontaneous laughter. Indignant, he shouted angrily – Dieses ist nicht ein Witz.

Fancy him remembering so much about Winnipeg, home of Winnie the Pooh, the loveable fictional anthropomorphic bear created by A.A. Milne, who once said: If you live to be 100, I hope I live to be 100 minus 1 day, so I never have to live without you. And the hotel bar where the entertainment, The Human Juke Box, was an annoying bloke by the name of Al.



So what's in yer cool bag? Books! Bloody 'ell a cassette player. Do it work? I knows a bloke who knows about them.

Sidling through the slightly ajar front door, stopped from opening fully by an elephant's foot stuffed with a selection of parasols, the antique brass door bell clanging, Ashley is frozen in place, surrounded, finding herself slap bang in the middle of a chock-a-block wonderland. Along the wall the glass cases display row upon row of exotic trinkets, worthless baubles from another time, now collectable, longevity creating false values, relics from the sixties when individualism ruled Queen. Carved wooden crucifixes dangling on braided leather thongs, headbands woven from tiny colourful beads, rings with the stones shaped as skulls, bizarre pendant earrings, snake bangles writhing, frail wire rimmed spectacles, windup watches – wrist and pocket, their stilled hands all pointing to different times, an impressive collection of engraved Zippo cigarette lighters, gaudily painted mechanical windup toys: miniature tractors from Czechoslovakia, a variety of cute tin animals, several saxophone playing cats, a

drummer-boy panda, dogs and frogs capable in their heyday of acrobatic tricks, flipping backward somersaults, dinky model cars... Oh look, a replica of Freddie's yellow Ferrari.

Above the display, reaching to the ceiling, the wall is papered with posters advertising *The Maltese Falcon*, a film starring Humphrey Bogart as private investigator Sam Spade, always wielding a smoking gun, and Mary Astor his femme fatale in a slinky red dress with a daring plunging neckline. Dozens of different artistic renditions illustrating this 1941 classic masterpiece. Further along there's a bin filled with movie star photographs sealed in plastic bags: Bogart, Astor, Sydney Greenstreet the sinister fat man, and a creepy looking bloke with popping eyes and a polka dot bow tie by the name of Peter Lorre, among them.

Not a square inch of the walls are bare, cases filled with books, books and more books, spilling out into piles heaped about the floor, a whole section with small indexed wooden drawers, the labelling cards alphabetical: A for Agate, Z for Zircon, a collection of semi-precious stones. Kitschy souvenir salt and pepper

shakers, cups and plates with hand painted vistas of Niagara Falls, Graceland celebrating Elvis, and what appears to be a popular item, a commemorative plate of Diana, Princess of Wales.

Carefully threading her way through the maze of bicycles hanging from ceiling hooks, tables covered with cardboard boxes of coins from far away foreign lands, piles of magazines, one table jam-packed with old-fashioned cameras from the days when film still existed. Forgotten ephemera. Ashley is drawn toward the back of the building, music materialising from a speaker high up in a corner, to another room separated by a mirrored door that reflects her flushed countenance, inviting her to step through the looking glass, step backwards into an alternate universe.

The music, although she could not yet know this, is a popular song from *Kismet*, a 1950s musical, appropriately titled *Baubles, Bangles & Beads*, based on Alexander Borodin's second theme of the second movement of his *String Quartet in D*. Jazz singers being drawn to the beguiling melody and advanced harmonic

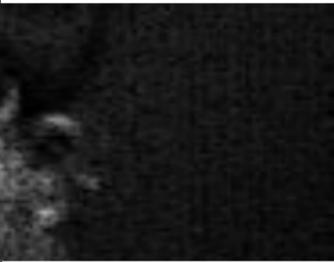
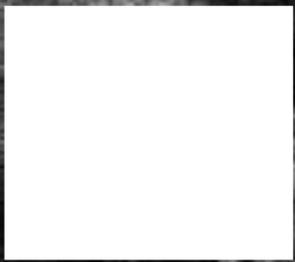
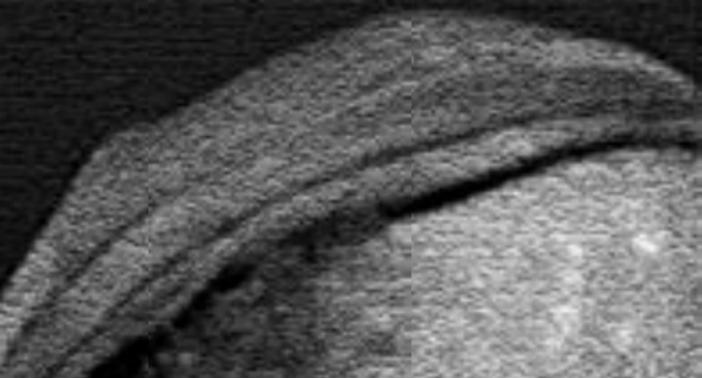
structure. The familiar configuration of the song is energised by a key change – up a major third interval for every section; the transition is marked by a bracing harmonic progression from the central major key of one section to the tritone minor key of the following section. Jazz players and singers appreciating the challenge. Peggy Lee enjoyed a best-selling version back in 1954, but the version Ashley is hearing is by the controversial Nina Simone, the sixth child of a North Carolina preacher's family, a civil rights activist and a fine pianist who uses her prodigious talents in a broad range of musical genres including jazz, blues, soul, folk, rhythm and blues, gospel and pop.

*Baubles, bangles,
Hear how they jing, jing-a-ling-a,
Baubles, bangles,
Bright, shiny beads.
Sparkles, spangles,
My heart will sing, sing-a-ling-a,
Wearing baubles, bangles and beads.
I'll glitter and gleam so,
Make somebody dream so,*

*That someday he may buy me,
A ring, ring-a-ling-a,
I've heard that's where it leads,
Wearing baubles and bangles and beads.*

Out back is where the Hill brothers hide their gems, their true love: radios, television sets, record, CD and cassette players, bins filled with 33-1/3 r.p.m. long-playing vinyl records, CDs, DVDs, videos and cassette tapes.

A surrealistic inventory of other-worldly sounds.



Hum over the horizon, that's what one composer out there on the left coast called the Hogtown scene; penned a composition of the same title, dedicated it to Farrington. Needing music away from the simple minded imitation of jazz heroes inspired a bored coterie of the more adventurous to head east, to check out the centre of the universe. Among them there's a junkie, stereotyping the common conception of jazz and drugs, who will become the bane of everybody's lives, his talent overshadowed by his conceited puerile stupidity. Funny what one remembers. He'd disappeared; the festival, a collaboration of the hometown boys and a bunch of improvisers from away, about to begin, and he's nowhere to be found, causing anxious organisers to search high and low, ending up in the grotty basement of the Horsefly Hotel where there's nothing to see apart from piles of abandoned junk and rows of storage cupboards. One, back in a dark corner, has mewling noises seeping through its slightly ajar door. There he is, crouched in the interior, cobweb covered, a pathetic shaky figure staring out googly-eyed, the heroin taking

him into useless zones. An introduction to an encore. As the saying goes.

One of those freezing February days, the snow thick on the ground, a Thursday it was, back in the late eighties, and Farrington Gurney and Arnos Vale have been hired as a wind duet to perform music, music specially composed by Arnos, for a left-coaster wedding ceremony, the event held in the grandeur of the elegant Great Hall at the university; as traditional as it gets. Until death do them part. It all seemed to be going along fine, the formalities over and done with, the reception in full swing at one of them hip restaurants, down in Lennoxville. Regardless of the hidden truths, what other thoughts one might be harbouring, this time belongs to the bride and groom, so when the junkie starts mouthing off, the telling of personal lies, the gang around the table became unsettled, things said that should remain forever mute, kept for other times. The junkie, filled with whatever he'd scored that day, just cannot shut up, determined to prove beyond a doubt that he's the hippest cat on the planet. What to do? Clobber him into si-

lence or leave. The latter seeming the more sensible solution. Out into the freezing night, consumed with rage, Farrington staggers, once again full-to-the-brim with gratuitous booze. It's late, no traffic to speak of, nothing impeding his crossing into the north heading side street that's lined with three foot high uncleared snow banks. He's almost unable to remain on his feet, the slippery sidewalks not helping his tottering journey, when suddenly his feet whip out from under him, sending him crashing down into the rock-solid snow bank, head first. Comatose. Late at night, not a soul in sight, his wedding gear an unsuitable suit, silk shirt, no hat, minus ten degrees, and Farrington is about to become a five foot ten inch frozen popsicle. Hypothermia'd euthanasia.

Where could he be, Arnos wondered, worried. Farrington's horn is snug and warm in its case still on the seat; waiting. Best check, walk around the Peruvian outpost, mingle with the crowd. Not a sign. So out Arnos goes, good fortune taking him on the very path, karma directing him through the heavily falling snow,

the growing storm bringing visibility down to a few feet, and there, not too many steps into Milk Lane, is Farrington, prone, a thin trickle of blood running down his forehead, settling into his eyeball behind the broken lenses of his wire-framed spectacles. A slight smile frozen in place, as though asleep, waiting for the conclusion.

The Leafs hockey franchise that season have been a shabby excuse for a team, suffering a long stretch of losses, defeated by the Red Wings in the division quarter-final of the Stanley Cup. On that same Thursday night – performing to a small crowd, the fans deterred by the inclement weather and the team’s lack of success – they beat the Islanders 4-3 at the Gardens.

This ain't for sale eh? Nice condition. Do it work? All this from brother Barton, him being the electronics expert, Lawrence being jewellery and Clay taking care of bookkeeping. Let's 'ave a look love, seems that it might just be working. From the inside pocket of his coat he produces, with a flourish, a compact zipped up leather pouch that when opened reveals two rows of delicate jeweller's screwdrivers, selecting a suitable size he removes the corner screws, pops off the case exposing the internal workings. Among the hodgepodge of gizmos filling his cluttered bench he selects a Memorex Air Duster, compressed canned air for removing the accumulated dust and dirt; the remaining, hard to remove gunk, Q-Tipped away with alcohol cleaner. Let's give it a try eh! Give us a cassette.

Ashley, impatient for discovery, is already searching through the bins lining the wall, hundreds of cassettes catalogued under subject: opera, classical, blues, folk, jazz... M for Monk, and there it is, Live at the Five Spot 1958. A Spanish bootleg copy, Barton says, Not the best quality, but as good as you can get. I knows

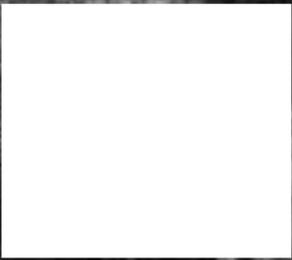
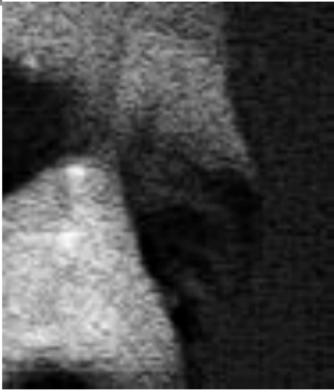
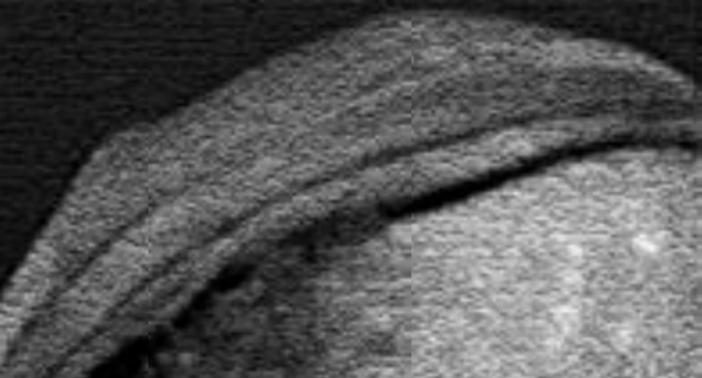
a young fella has a CD version of that, lives out in the village. Klactoveedsedstene. Named after a Charlie Parker tune y'know! Comes in here every Saturday morning. Not Bird, man, Barton says laughing, I means Aztec. That's tomorrow.

Saturday morning was traditionally the time collectors went searching, trundling around the downtown junk shops: books, records, cassettes, posters, photographs, anything out-of-print and collectable. Slim pickings these days, as most of it has either perished through lack of use or has been gobbled up, hidden away in private collections. For Ashley, a newcomer, starting from scratch, everything is abundant, the thrill of discovering Live At The Five Spot, her very own copy, now being played in her cassette player that Barton has refurbished.

Ashley has not yet made the connection between the Maltese Falcon and Aztec, mesmerised by the thrill of hearing Thelonious's music again filling her brain full, impeding her hearing, for a moment not assimilating what's been said, not hearing that the young man

who has set her off on this path will arrive tomorrow. She's more intent on investigating the contents of the cassette bins. Chronologically arriving at F she discovers there's a musician with the same weird name as the Maserati racing car driver. Rupert 'Chummy' Fanshaw. Could he be the very same Chummy Fanshaw who her grandfather so much admired, the one written about in the diary tucked away in the bottom of her leather satchel?

The stuff that dreams are made of, as Bogart would say.



What a pair Farrington and Arnos made, stylish to the point of absurd. What little remained of their hair was bleached blonde; wire-rimmed utility spectacles, Boinas Elósegui Basque berets, and always dressed in black from top to bottom with a splash of red. Very arty. Their attire invariably attracting attention, some unwanted. Farrington is halfway through his expected life, the elder of the two by some six years, and when mistaken for twins in a bus station, a provincial airport or a family-style restaurant, Arnos's immediate retort would be: No not brothers, he's my father.

They'd toured together for decades, always putting on a good show, a mixture of ideas surrounding their own compositions, the odd popular song – Luiz Bonfá's theme from *Black Orpheus* a ringer, prettied up by the combination of their horns: concert flute and soprano saxophone, contemporary Japanese music's sliding tonality among the repetition of repeats. In small town art galleries, audiences curious as to their intentions, brought about another disguise, pretending surrealistic leanings, announcing themselves as Svenson and

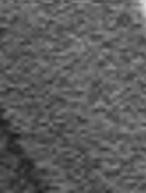
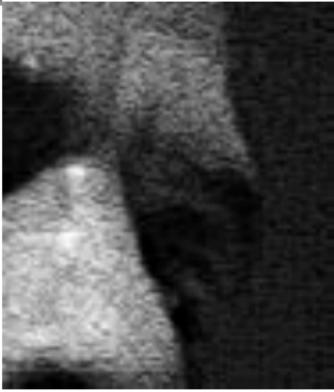
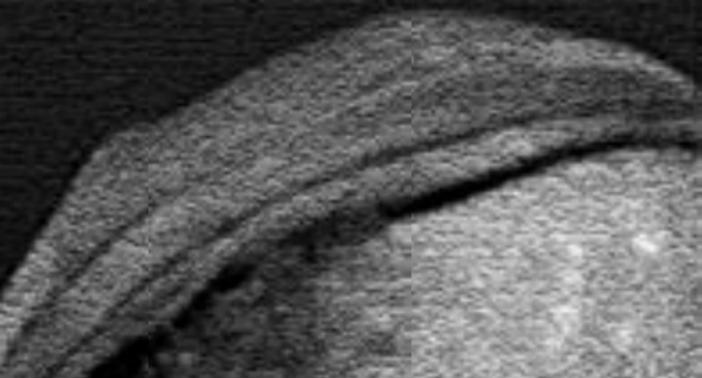
Jenson split-rail fencing experts. What! Do they even know what that means, that the simple construction of logs split lengthwise into rails are built without nails, and in the American Civil War were a major source of firewood for the freezing soldiers. I think not. Just another posturing, passed off as humour.

Small towns were the most interesting, away from the big cities' been-there-done-that mantra, curators desperate to impress the grant-givers with their sophistication, not realising that the true meaning of sophistication was to become less than natural. Outside in the high street and at the local hotel, the truth is told. Their accommodation was, if their fortune held, at a suitably seedy grand old railway hotel, now long ago demolished, at most an artifact illustrated on a historical buildings website, the dimly lit empty lounge bars smelling vaguely of disuse, where the waitress poured the shot of Courvoisier cognac into a lukewarm cup of Maxwell House instant coffee. Complete with powdered milk. Sugar sir!

Just a few blocks up the street is the Thunderhead Tavern, the carpark filled with

pickup trucks, a prominent illuminated sign advertises an all-girl country and western band. Through the half-open door comes an early, unheeded, warning – Dolly Parton’s *Why’d You Come In Here Lookin’ Like That*. The two friends are thrilled, a music form they’d rarely enjoyed, and draft beer just five bucks a pitcher. That’s as far as it went. The waiters, costumed in standard black and white uniform, a money belt apron, slicked back greasy hair, just glancing sideways at them in passing, never approaching their table. No Jeans. No Tartan Shirt. No Cowboy Anything. No Service Eh.

Further along in the journey, out west in the capitol city of Victoria, after a failed concert in a granola crowd cafe/bakery with their friend Tiny Gibson, they’re chased from the nighttime streets by pickup truck hoodlums hollering: Kill The Queers. Kill The Queers...



Only lowlifes frequent The Greeks, a storefront bar that was for thirty years or more a wholesale fish shop, the smell never dispersing, mixed with fried fast food, escaping through the exhaust fan, wafting across the tiny front patio crowded with dopers. It's just a block over from the Maltese Falcon, a home to those abandoned by society, unable to qualify for the bankers' microchip implants, surviving day-to-day on barter, the odd job payment for a warm bed, a chance to shower and shave (although not high among their priorities); a meal not scrounged from the stinking waste receptacles out back of the elegant eateries just a few more blocks north, up there in Lennoxville, an elitist protected urban enclave where the wealthy reside.

Through the door, along the right-hand side, behind a narrow counter, is the bar and open kitchen, leaving barely enough space to pass through to the back, to squeeze past the line of tiny tables tucked up against the opposite wall. On the wall behind the bar a chalkboard advertises the never-changing daily specials: egg on toast, beans on toast, sardines on

toast, Kraft cheese slices on toast, burgers our specialty, bacon sandwiches; everything fried, microwaved or toasted. Draft beer froths out of the chrome tap, on offer always the same nationalistic named brew, Canadian sure to be in the brand name. Watcha want a glass or a jug? Let's see yer money.

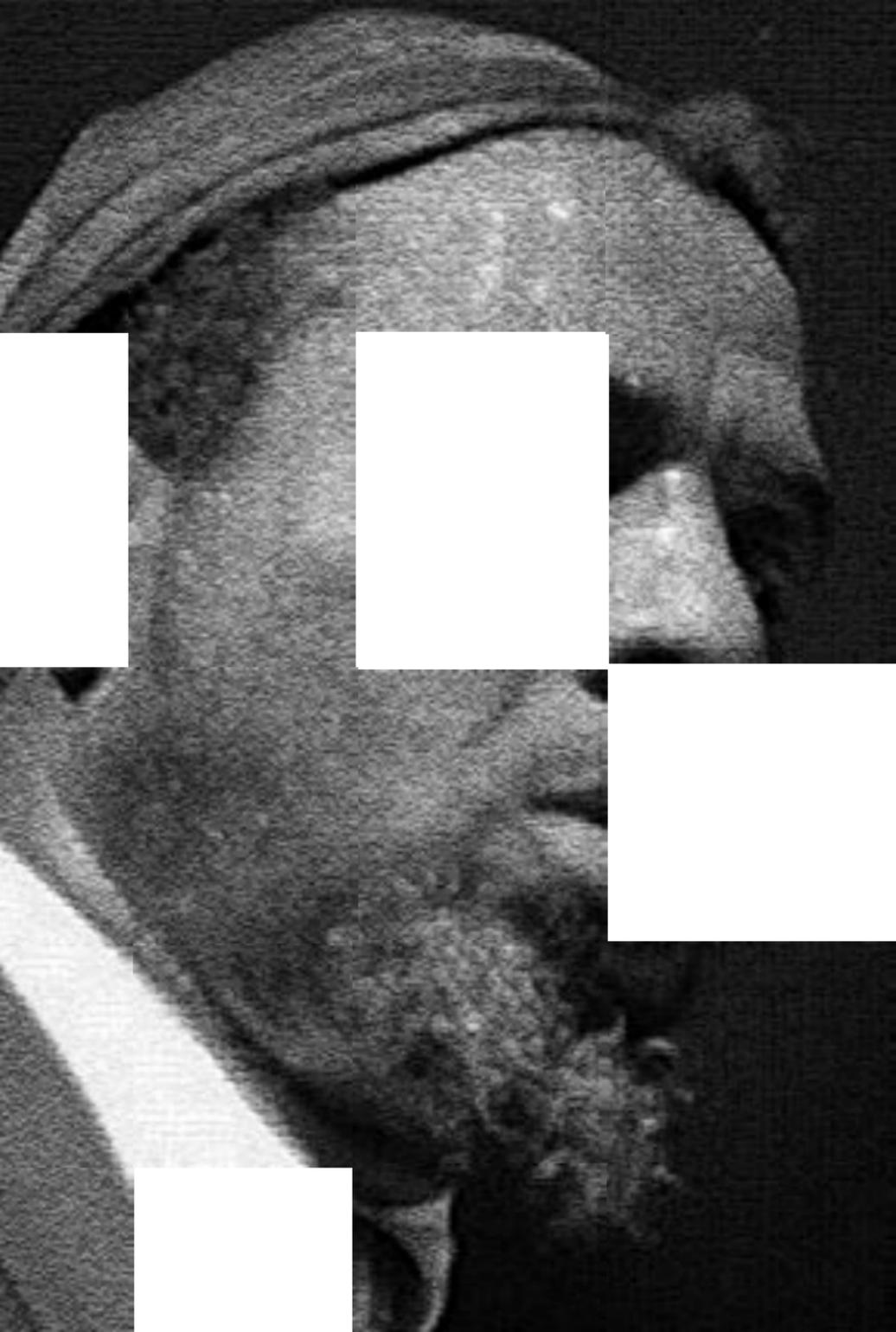
The place is always jammed packed, the constantly cooking food and unwashed bodies discharging an unrelenting malodorous odour. Most nights, in the back corner, the room's walls plastered with fading posters of Little Richard, Fats Domino, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Pete Seeger, Joni Mitchell, Jim Morrison, a shabbily dressed guitarist churns out long forgotten folk and rock melodies. Opposite the minuscule stage a narrow staircase descends into the basement toilets, the stench of the neglected crapper flowing up to meet you, a place where one could always score a joint, a chunk of hashish or a tinfoil square of the harder stuff: cocaine and heroin. Spook, when he's physically able, sweeps up the floor, collects abandoned glasses, puts out the garbage. He's sometimes rewarded by Jimmy, the

owner, with a sandwich, or perhaps a generous benefactor has provided him with a free drink. Some nights he sits in the dark corner behind the bandstand, alongside the door of the emergency exit, invisible, listening to a vaguely remembered Doors song.

*When you're strange faces come out of
the rain*

*When you're strange no one remembers
your name*

*When you're strange, when you're strange
When you're strange.*



A shaft of light touches the corner of the large fading blotchy brown monochromatic picture pinned up on the wall, spider shit defacing the details. Crouched, down on his knees, in the lower right-hand corner, the camera-man's camera is directed close-up at the fuzzy headed, bespectacled cellist who is hip formal in attire: black trousers, white coat, dark shirt with brighter tie, sawing away at the strings. To his right, partially hidden, lost in the blackness of background, a serious looking violinist stares down at the instrument's bridge. A string section. On the far left the long-haired mustachioed percussionist looks out across the septet, a flitting smile celebrating a successful paradiddle vibrating the skin-tight snare. Down, slightly to the right, seen only in three-quarter profile, no face revealed, is a tenor saxophonist seated on a stool, his jet-black hair bunched up into a ponytail, his stance suggesting he's of native origin. A Mohawk perhaps. The bassist, also sporting a moustache, lays over the shoulder of his upright bass, pizzicato, lost in the music. The other two are bearded. A trombonist intently listening to the other, a waistcoated casu-

al looking fellow, a knitted toque covering most of his head, is leaning back, soloing on what appears to be a tiny metal clarinet. Overhead floodlights are glaring, the cellist is on a raised podium, giving the appearance of a movie set. Nothing indicating where. Or why. Or who.

Woody, Legs, Slide and Sal are all dead, in that sequence, spread over twenty years; the others, the rest of the gang, scattered somewhere across the planet at unknown locations. An artists' jazz band some called it. It all began in a room over a jazz club back in the early sixties with a bunch of abstract expressionists. By the time Farrington becomes involved, invited to join by Woody, it's become a weekly convocation of Mekanayzn Avenue guys, gathering together most Friday nights at Sal's loft at the edge of the Jewish market, half a block up from Al's mother's tavern, for an evening of free jazz helped along with a couple of bottles of wine, the energy elasticated with a good pipe of hash, half a tab of Methylphenidate to assist in the concentration friends trying their luck at the odd bluesy standard, but mostly just on-the-spot composition, raggedy versions of joyful noise. All night long. A private affair.

Phillip Marsh, known locally as Spook, is often seen wandering the maze of narrow streets, foraging the trash bins, desperate for food. Filth is his constant companion, the battered Trilby hat covering his lice-ridden unkempt hair, layers of coats and pants protecting him from the elements, boots long past their due date, wrapped with paper, tied with string. Two shopping bags – ironically flaunting designer logos – hold his worldly goods; a heavy walking stick helping him along, to ward off harm; dogs, thieves after his stash, small boys and drunken revellers taunting him. More often than not he's swigging from a bottle of moonshine clasped in his filthy gloved fingers. A rollie always hanging from his bleeding mouth that's half filled with rotting black-stained teeth. The red and gold Craven "A" tobacco tin and Rizla rolling machine are two of his few prized possessions, processing the butts that he collects from the gutters satisfying his craving, adding a hacking cough to his incoherent mumblings.

He's a small stooped man, hardly recognisable as human; his life, after the death of

his beloved Avalon, her life taken away giving birth to their second child, is a continuous downhill slide, impossible to recover from the trauma. He remembers nothing of that moment, only the incredible weight of hopelessness hanging about his tattered body. Alcohol and drugs adding to his dysfunction. In his eyes the truth of his pain hides beneath the watering, almost colourless, without apparent focus. Darting every which where. Most assume him to be mentally defective, not knowing the reason for his condition, his appearance affirming their thoughts; the constant smell of death lingering.

Yeah right, a purist. I think not. That's an illusion, clearly a lie. His daughter retaliating to something a hipster had said: Well if Mick Jagger phoned him to go on tour with the Stones he'd be straight down the music shop buying a tenor saxophone and on the next flight out to wherever. Though he'd often said that he was cheated of his youthful adventures by jazz, never learned the lyrics of the pop songs that all the other kids were singing. It would be years before he discovered what he'd missed, middle-aged before enjoying Blueberry Hill, Blue Monday, I'm In Love Again, all that great Fats Domino stuff; even the Everly Brothers and Elvis passed him by.

Jazz started local, the trumpet player down at the club who loved Miles, causing him to be sidetracked, and then Clifton Wood leaning against the bar talking of nothing else. Miles this, Miles that. Ruined Farrington for life, if you take his word for it. And once he heard them Prestige records ^[8], smuggled in in the kit bags of sailors, the band with Coltrane, it was, as the expression goes, all over but the shouting. Just like Thelonious at the Five Spot. No going back.

They went everywhere together, him and Clifton, working the door at the pub as inept minders, taking tickets, unloading the drums from the van, anything to be close to the music. Once, after a gig, invited to a student party, they'd taken a copy of Fontessa by the MJQ, thinking that the quiet sophistication of Versailles, Angel Eyes, Over the Rainbow, Bluesology... would be perfect, snuggle into some off-duty nurse, get set-up for the night, a couple of bennies from the medicine cabinet and a shag. Not a minute into Versailles when someone hollers, Take that shit off, Let's fuckin' dance.

Should've remembered the story of the MJQ playing Softly As In The Morning Sunrise at Zardi's, the composer, Sigmund Romberg jumping up from his table, spilling his cocktail, angry, out he went, shouting that they'd ruined his tune. Everyone a critic. Ruined, that's the word.

Then this other time with Clifton: Miles with Sonny Stitt, Wynton Kelly, Paul Chambers and Jimmy Cobb up on the stage; just imagine, the sorcerer impeccably attired, poised, rais-

ing his green anodised trumpet to his lips – If I Were A Bell, and Clifton unable to contain himself reaches forward to touch the Prince of Darkness’s trouser cuff. Out you go sonny, quick like that, the usher not digging the moment, likely not a jazz fan, just a uniformed flunky working for minimum wage.

So many times Miles was part of their lives, hipness personified. Super cool y’know, his horn a delicacy, so light, a man walking on eggshells; and so handsome, his threads, man, to die for. He was the epitome of sartorial splendour, prompting not one, but two eminent magazines to recognise his style. George Frazier – no not the boxer, although that would have been pertinent given Miles’s predilection for the sport – was a debonair magazine writer and jazz critic who wrote an article in Esquire titled The Art Of Wearing Clothes, that Miles Davis – the thirty-four year old genius of “progressive jazz” trumpet – is an individualist who favours skin-tight trousers, Italian-cut jackets. His seersucker coats, which have side vents, are custom made. His tailor: Emsley of New York, charges \$185 a suit. And that’s not all,

man, dig, Gentlemen's Quarterly named him Best Dressed Man of the year. Wearing clothing that reflects future fashion trends observed another. Cool man, dig, and you know they – Clifton and Farrington – were soon wearing those Italian jobs: narrow lapelled three button high jackets, stovepipe trousers, slim jim ties poking out from a button-down collar, and elastic-sided boots. Birth of their cool man! Dig!

Gallop's dairy farm had been in the Marsh family for four generations, out there on the outskirts of town, their modest black and white Holstein-Friesian herd providing 150 gallons of milk every day for the village. On reflection Grandpa Eronel and Grandma Ruby were perfect portraits of the farmer, eremites, rarely venturing outside the rough stone walls surrounding the farm. Day in and day out they trundled the full-to-the-brim tin-lined copper milk cans in a rickety wagon down to the end of the lane to be collected by Bolivar's Creamery for bottling. Half went to the village, the leftovers churned into butter, frozen into ice cream, cultured into yoghurt.

With the light barely illuminating the sky, the first sounds of a new day, the metallic clanking of cow bells as the herd rambled toward the barn, would greet Hilperton, time to gather them together, persuade them with a gentle whack about the rump into stalls, tie them by the neck to a post, fill their trough with fodder, then squatting on a stool, begin the first of the day's milking. He loved this daily chore, except for his grandparents they

were his only intimate companions, each one a familiar, sharing his thoughts as he caressed their bulging udders, rhythm-a-ning the warm milk into the galvanised pail. Thinking the names he'd given them, out loud.

Jazz attracts strange bedfellows, unlikely collaborators in the search for their common heroes. 1972, that's the year. Early in September. Searching for the necromancer. Off to America they are, a bunch of them, crossing the border into Michigan, on to Ann Arbor. Four of them in the planning. Farrington with his trouble and strife and Lawrence and his missus Lillie. Strange pair them, Lawrence and Lillie, him so quiet, a silversmith of repute, and her, so bloody noisy. Loved a snifter of brandy and a line of coke any old time. Outrageous I've heard her called. Anyway, she's a hairdresser imported from London, specialising in a geometric, Bauhaus-inspired style, a simple wash and wear cut created by a bloke who was so popular he'd been described by converts as a rock star. Changed the world with a pair of scissors. So it was said.

It's the weekend see, the trendy shop in the Village that Lillie oversees is in high gear, fashionistas lining up in the tree-lined courtyard, sipping at caffe lattes, idling over chocolate sprinkled foamed milk, craving the popular Bond Street creation. Shop hours ten 'til five.

No way she can get out of there until the shop closes. No problem, a creative girl our Lillie is, talented in the ways of seduction, her hair and makeup perfect, that's what she did day in and day out for a livin', innit. Quantified skirt just barely above the knees, black leather, showing off her shapely mesh-stockinged legs, her blouse tied just below her ample breasts Rita Hayworth style. And that voice, a cheeky cockney confidence, enough to charm the balls off any bloke. As the saying goes.

Not too many ways on a Saturday night that Lillie can travel the 241 miles from the Village to the Otis Spann Memorial Field in Ann Arbor. But she'd already figured a plan, straight down Crookshank's Lane in a taxi, across from the mainland on a ferry – the shortest regular ferry route in the world at 400 feet – and into the reception lounge of the island airport to check out any flights which might be going in the general direction of Ann Arbor. Sure enough luck, as it always was, is on Lillie's side. There's a young American pilot, ready to be beguiled by Lillie's superstar personage, who's about to take an urgent shipment of machine parts to

a depot at the Ann Arbor Municipal Airport, located just three miles south of downtown. So off they go in his single propeller Cessna 172 Skyhawk, buzzing along the north shore of Lake Ontario. Landed just before dark is settling in.

Apart from Chuck, the all-purpose customs official janitor, the airport is closed down for the night. He's enchanted by this weird English chick, bewitched by her strangeness, inviting her into his country without, as Her Majesty requests and requires, let or hindrance. And to afford the bearer of the passport such assistance and protection as may be necessary. Unaware of Lillie's penchant for un-American activities. Being English, especially that voice, is very cool south of the border. Could just be Mick's voice rocketing the Stones onto the Billboard chart with Plundered My Soul and Good Time Women that did the trick. The record, Exile On Main St., was released, coincidentally, just a couple of months earlier on Farrington's thirty-fourth birthday. Chuck closing up for the night has no chance, offers to take Lillie to meet up with her friends at the festival.

Between them they've scored backstage passes, four supercool Brits overwhelming the long-haired hippy attendants guarding the entrance. The other three have already been digging the free samples passing around among the huge crowd, mostly grass and hash, the occasional slug of cheap wine, and the music's beyond their wildest dreams. Not only the blues of Howlin' Wolf, Junior Walker's All-Stars, Hound Dog Taylor & the House Rockers, Mighty Joe Young with Lucille Spann, Bobby "Blue" Bland and Dr. John, though that would have been enough, there's more, the music of the American avant garde that they all love so much. The Art Ensemble of Chicago, Sun Ra, Pharoah Sanders and Archie Shepp, filling their hearts full.

Miles is up on Sunday night, scheduled to climax the festival, to follow a star-studded lineup of Otis Rush, Leo Smith with Marion Brown, Lightnin' Slim and Boogie Woogie Red with the Boogie Brothers. But that's not to be, Miles superstar, in control, demands the opening spot. It's too long ago, hidden in an irretrievable past, to recollect the band members;

soprano saxophone certainly, electrically amplified strings for sure – guitar and bass – and exotica, sitar, tabla, congas and percussion galore, thinking one thing doin' another on the corner, the show rated X, a honky-tonk roughness dressed in black satin, right off signalling a sanctuary of sorts, to be elevated into. Bright lights, colour splashing, the star he is, electrifying, dressed in his finest silks and satins, an alchemist mixing funky rhythmic dreamscapes.

Wonder what happened to them, the Hill gang.



Little or no memory remained of his earliest life, sent to live with his grandparents when he was just two years old, unaware of his mother's death. His father never returning to claim him, disappeared. His only memories being of his grandparents. Now pushing up daisies. He's all alone in the world. He'd set out searching for his father with the little knowledge he had; a book of family photographs, almost unreadable sixteen year old scribbled letters, the remembered stories that Grandpa Eronel told sat around the fire, pacifying the goblins that rose up, infiltrating his thoughts at unlikely moments. The letters offer up no clues. And who were all these people in the photographs, the family gathering, sat on the stoop of what appears to be a mansion. He recognises his grandparents, even though it is from a time when they were young, and of the two children sat in the front row, one must be his father, decked out in warm clothing, a knitted toque and Wellington boots. In the back row, serious, unsmiling, the two oldsters are in all likelihood his legendary great-grandparents. Great-Grandpa Augustine's white-haired

head is partially covered by a Fez, a style of hat unknown to Hilperton, apparently popular among aristocratic Muslims in Asia; the round black-rimmed glasses perched on his nose suggest a professorial personage. His consort is toffed up in a fur collared coat with matching hat, her stern countenance glaring out at the camera. The other photograph, carried in his wallet, the image fading, scuffed and crumpled from constant inspection, shows his mother and father, young and carefree, posing, leaning against the railings beside a telescope on a seaside pier. She is pregnant, and off to one side, its occupant invisible, sits a pram. On the back a rubber stamped date: August 2/2032.

He jerked awake, startled, wondering what could have inspired such an illusion. The early morning sunshine creeping through the fading rotting Welsh and Cuban flags covering the bedroom window eradicating the peculiar dream sequence. Back in America he is, the year 1956, the day before his 18th birthday – May 11th. That day Miles is really on form, clear from the intrusion of drugs; himself, Trane, Red, PC and Philly Joe smokin' through marvellous renditions...

*It never entered my mind that when I fall
in love because of something I dreamed last
night that it could happen to you in your
own sweet way*

But that's not it, it's the year itself somehow, a vague flash, his old mate Vinnie Kayak popping up. A recording session again, this time in London, it's raining and bloody cold, December most likely. A recording session?

What a far out name, eh!, Rupert 'Chummy' Fanshaw. Rupert, same name as that bloody annoying little bear with the red sweater and bright yellow check trousers with matching yellow scarf,

obnoxious little know-it-all from the Daily Express newspaper. His mates are a bunch of bloody anthropomorphics; like Bill's a Badger, Edward Trunk – you can guess what he is, then there's Willie the mouse. Running out of names wuz they. Parents and friends who are human. Really! One's even a bleedin' professor. Just as if. Every Christmas without fail little boy Farrington got the Annual. Started off the nightmares I would wager.

The real Rupert, let's call him Chummy shall we, was a saxophonist, played with the best of them, back in the thirties, with Spike Hughes, toured with Billy Mason's band backing Louis Armstrong, recorded with Valida Snow and Benny Carter. Bit of a star. But that can't be it, Farrington's not born yet. And in the war when Chummy is leading the BBC Radio Rhythm Club Sextet Farrington's still too young to know, still sucking on his mother's tit. Like has been said already, his roots are in his record player. That's it. Vinnie's first recording. December 1956, Chummy's New Quintet^[9]. Lovely names the tunes have: Goldfish Blues – one of Vinnie's, Doin' the Uptown Lowdown and Knock Yourself Out. Why don't you! A motor race car driver as well. So it's said.

You've heard sin-jin or singeon in connection with the pronunciation of St. John, Beauchamps as Beecham – aristocratic family names, or the upper-crust Featherstone-Haugh simplified into Fanshaw. His father, caught in a long past age, has named him Rupert Hilperton Marsh after a jazz hero, one Rupert 'Chummy' Fanshaw, a legendary British saxophonist whose music was much admired by Great-Grandpa Augustine, his exiguous collection of the Radio Rhythm Club Sextet ^[10] recordings with future British jazz stars amongst the personnel, and the legendary big band leaders Vic Lewis, Jack Parnell and Kenny Baker. The tunes are marvelous old jazz standards that made the feet tap, uncontrollably: Clarinet Marmalade, Rug Cutter Swing, King Porter Stomp... such period gems being passed down through the family to the son of a son of a son, played on an ancient gramophone, the generated electricity haphazard, yellowed flickering light at best, the old long-playing records giving up their bawdy music as the worn-out needle spiralled hissing to the centre.

The cardboard covers are illustrated with drawings, one showing the saxophonist to be a

tall, thin, balding, formally dressed gentleman, white collared and striped tie, his horn-rimmed spectacles giving him a studious personae. He's wielding a cumbersome looking instrument that the notes on the reverse side inform Hilpertson is a baritone saxophone. The other cover is pastel blue with a crude illustration of a globe covered with childishy drawn coloured replications of musical instruments. The somewhat obvious title claiming Around the World in Jazz. Grammatically as clumsy as the pictorial depictions. A dog peering into a large conical machine with the name of the record company – RCA VICTOR – appearing in an orange oblong. Floating in the blue wash is LONG PLAY 33-1/3. Beneath a capitalised ENGLAND is Chummy's name. The tunes, difficult to read on the scuffed jacket, appear in the bottom right-hand corner, three jumps; One O'Clock, Three O'Clock and One Two Three Four; more numerical designations with Five Flat Flurry and Seven Come Eleven, a Stevedore Stomping and a couple more of Soft Winds and No Script. Almost invisible in tiny letters is Printed in U.S.A. Every detail evidencing a time long before his birth.

Behind the door, badly in need of paint, there's an unlit staircase, creaking at every tread. At the top a dimly lit passageway, cobwebs brushing against the face, shoes sticking to the unwashed floor, the persistent smell of unwashed bodies rising up from the bar below. At the far end, through the opening of the doorless bathroom, a filthy seatless toilet and stained washbasin can be seen. A cracked begrimed window pane above the sink provides the only illumination. Four doors open into squalid, minimally furnished, windowless rooms. An army surplus metal folding cot with a thin stained mattress, a beat-up table with a fold-up utility chair and a thrift store four-drawer wooden dresser are jammed into each of the tiny rooms. Accommodation above the Greeks.

Standing beneath the awning outside the shuttered Maltese Falcon, sheltering from the pouring rain, Ashley ponders her next move, knowing that returning to Baroque Bluffs is not an option, realising that she has nowhere to go, no relatives or friends down here in the city. That she doesn't even know the name

of the boy that has brought her here to the market. Or anything about him. Let's get out of the rain, he says, swing on by Café Bemsha, it's just around the corner, a great hangout where we could be dry, order a hot drink and a sandwich, 'ave a chat about what's happenin'. The waiters nod hello and a couple of the customers acknowledge him, greet him by name, as though he's a local. Yeah, he says, I have a room nearby, over on the next street.

He'd been hanging around this neighbourhood ever since his grandparents died, out searching for his long lost father, eventually discovering him among the disenfranchised street dwellers. Showing the photograph around of his father posing on the seaside promenade with Avalon. That's me in the pram he would say. Hopeful. It was Barton Hill who had figured out that the handsome young man in the photograph was Spook, his constant mutterings about his pregnant wife, his lost son and daughter, surfacing among the babbling; the odd recognisable old jazz tune whistled.

Hilpertson has no idea where Spook goes, disappearing like a puff of smoke, secret places

beneath bridges, disused railway siding huts, in among the trees at the local park communing with the animals: coyotes, foxes, racoons, squirrels, moles, rats and mice, singing along with the birds – who knows. Rarely, as if afraid, does he visit the room above the Greeks, not yet entirely sure who this young man who shows him such affection is, his damaged mind after sixteen years of confusion unable to clear the debris. Although he can often be found downstairs in the bar, singing along with Banjo Billy hollering out Dylan's A Hard Rain's A-Gonna Fall...

*Oh, where have you been,
my blue-eyed son?
Oh, where have you been,
my darling young one?*

Barton, the youngest of the three Hill brothers, drives the bright yellow Mercedes Benz Sprinter delivery van to collect the larger items from the dwindling country mansions – where he gets the gasoline from is a mystery, and has removed from Gallop's dairy farm

– now in the hands of Monsanto Canada Inc.
– everything of value. Furniture: oak tables and chairs, glass-fronted cabinets; carpets, antique silverware, jewellery, all articles of interest to collectors, the cash collected providing Hilperton with a modest inheritance.

Hilperton has settled in above the Greeks, has brought a few personal articles from the farm to make his room more comfortable: Grandma Ruby's easy chair, the Cuisinart DCC-1200 Chrome Brew Central 12-Cup Programmable Coffeemaker, leather-bound photo albums, a framed reproduction – painted originally by French Impressionist Camille Pissaro – of cows being milked; bedding: blankets, pillows, sheets and the like; the radio, his favourite books, the record player and Grandpa Eronel's recordings of 'Chummy' Fanshaw.

So what's yer name then? Mine be Hilperton. How come you d'know about 'Chummy' Fanshaw then? My Great-Grandpa Augustine collected his records. I saw you'd bought that cassette. How old be you. I got all his records. My Grandpa Eronel loved his music. Where'd you live. We'd listen to them

every night when it be rainin'... On and on, chat chat chat, never giving Ashley a chance to get a word in edgeways. I've read his name in my Grandpa's diary, she managed to interject, And watched a program about him on Chinese History television. He was a Grand Prix driver. She digs down into her leather satchel, and voilà, produces the diary. That's weird, Hilperton says, both our grandpas knowing the same bloke. Man, how nutty is that. Here, I got a photo of him and Grandma when they was young. That's Great-Grandpa Augustine up the back, on the left. And that's me dad sat in the front. And here's a picture of me Mum and Dad at the seaside when I were two. Ashley stares, dumbfounded. His pregnant mother looks identical, a spitting image of the mother she has grown up with, adopted by. The date on the back is just a month before she was born. In a flash, simultaneously recognising their physical similarities, reflected physiognomy, they realise they are family, the long-lost siblings, the children's song of Spook's incessant nightmares. You could come and stay at my place, just for tonight, he says.



Leopold Bloom's Day, not today of course, how would he know anyway whether it was June 16th? Shopping lists flutter about, unrecognised, as he strolls the banks of the Abhainn na Life.

Where to? How far away from another time. Suitable Brown we shall call Farrington's collaborator; too strong an association, perhaps just a colleague in a vague art form taking place intermittently, for convenience in appropriating a future career, a useful accessory. Ulysses the subject matter, although fragmented beyond even Joyce's intention. A shopping list: there it is again, that reference, but that's how it's remembered, transferred into garrulous noise, grandiloquent improvised windy duets illustrating a long-ago careless disregarded purpose. There's a suburban college radio station, a project invented to assist students in recording live events, the extremeness of the idea sounds more useful than simple dialogue: written text, or prerecorded music too obvious, already planned and fixed in an apparent zone. Could it be called music? Certainly jazz fans heard it as gibberish, a form too much

in flux to be pinned down for their simplistic rhetorical taste; and singing with saxophone accompaniment absurd. Imagine if you can a culmination of a history that includes Gertrude Stein, the Cabaret Voltaire crowd, Brion Gysin, Bob Cobbing, Phil Minton and even the cartoon voices of Mel Blanc. Multiphonic sounds with nose, throat and voice, auditory sensations simultaneously mingling, tongue-popping mouth percussion. Compile a budget sez I, good, not a breath of air. I don't have to sneeze now!

Suitable Brown is called this not just for simple convenience, more a description, as Lillie would say, describing his penchant for suits of this execrable colour, purchased from bargain basement purveyors of budget fare. Cruel you might think such a description. Gaberdine I guarantee. Anyway, the four of them, Lillie, Lawrence, Suitable and Farrington are in the back snug of the Lazarus Arms – a fake British Pub – slowly getting pissed, segueing into bravado, when out of her pocket Lillie produces a crumbled joint. Not in here, Lawrence sez; brilliant considering that he's not always given

to sensible discourse, We'll all be thrown out. Nonsense, sez Lillie, We're regulars, as though this imaginary status counted for something. Just moments after ignition, simultaneous even, Geoffrey, their favourite waiter, queer as a nine dollar bill, dressed as all his kind were in those days, black everything, shaven head, plain gold earring, some with little moustaches imitating well-groomed poncey rozzers, arrives at the entrance to their "private room" and hollers, Out you assholes, what could you be thinking.

Drunken indignation bubbles up to no avail, and the gang find themselves grouped unsteadily outside the front door of their local drinkery, annoyed but ready to travel to their next favourite bar just a few blocks along the street where without hesitation they will serve regular customers regardless of what level of intoxication they've achieved. Suitable, being the sort of bloke they've all been trying to avoid unsuccessfully, for years, has leaning against the wall a bicycle, a woman's model Raleigh with no cross bar, the traditional step through, a mixte frame having the tube that

slopes down instead of going straight across, a shorter reach suitable for Suitable's stature, easier to mount and dismount, suitable for Suitable's limited ability. Off he wobbles down the middle of the road, filled with false confidence, and not a few yards travelled before the ladies model bicycle slides out from under him, depositing him on his ass in the middle of the rain soaked busy street. Biggest audience he ever had, revellers applauding, car horns honkin', a right old knees-up Mother Brown.

Ashley steps out into the market's bustling beginnings, a whiff of chaos permeating the dawn, the weak sunlight, creeping in from the east, struggles to infiltrate the narrow streets. The noise, bouncing from wall to wall, shouted conversations in unknown foreign languages, country folks' broad dialect, is the sound of shopkeepers beginning their daily routine, the screech of metal shutters being wound up, revealing windows filled with exotic cheeses, erotic clothing, a Jewish tailor advertising two suits for the price of one, racks of hats, herbal remedies, the smell of a hundred flavours of coffee and tea, the first whiff of baking bread. Street vendors, with another shipment of originals fallen from the backs of trucks, and farmers pushing their carts of fruit and vegetables, fresh from outlying farms, arriving. The district, although that's too grand a description for the nine square blocks the market occupies, slowly evolving, its quotidian character revealed.

Curbside, across the narrow pavement, a disgusting old tramp is sitting on an upturned wooden crate, sucking on the soggy remains of

a cheap cigar, its unpleasantness mixing with the smell of him, impregnating the already rancid air, setting Ashley's nose twitching. Coming, as she does, from the sanitary environment of Baroque Bluffs, the creature, rising up as though to hug her, sends a wave of terror surging through her body, petrified, as he reaches out. Hello Dad, says Hilperton, This be Ashley.

Unusual at this hour, a small crowd has gathered on the forecourt of the Maltese Falcon, not waiting, it turns out, for the Hill brothers to open up the store, but crowding around a strangely dressed person, a comic book character from some past time when Marvel Comics fulfilled youthful fantasy. So what does it do then, asks one young bloke. It's electric powered innit, says another. Bloody weird, says more than one. I just rode in from Klactoveedsedstene says the rider, down the decaying back roads, Me bike's cool in the rough, see it got a super strong frame made out of 6061 T6 aircraft seamless aluminium tubing, really light eh, and these fat tires can go anywhere... hydraulic suspension, 10-speed

Shimano Dura-Ace Di2 Derailleur, and back yer on the pannier is a 36 volt 10 amp lithium-ion battery powered by this 600 watt brushless electric motor down yer by the pedals... like all-terrain man. They only made 'em in flat black. Cool eh! Up on tiptoe, craning her neck to see over the crowd, Ashley recognises the speaker as the young man who started her off on this adventure.

Aztec, she shouts, it's me, Ashley.



Johnny Griffin's tenor saxophone unfurling atop Thelonious's scattered oracular chordings, a light blue sheen coming in on the Hudson, the four of them rhythm-a-ning, just a bunch of gigolos evidencing, epistrophying a nutty phrase or two, cooling one at the Five Spot before Bud walks in. Must be 'round midnight. A greeting from the back room. Barton remembering. Filling the early morning air with misterioso actions.

Time to look around, open their eyes to the obscure arcania, wonders of another time, seeing much more than the bins filled with cassettes and CDs. The wires strung across the back wall – above the larger, tiered wooden bins filled with phonograph records – are holding rows of sheet music, pinned up with wooden clothes pegs. On the foot square covers of the records are marvellous artworks, some monochromatic photographs – a saxophone player leaning nonchalantly against the grand piano; faded colour shots with absurd backdrops, often a luxurious car that the musician couldn't possibly own; illustrations, some spectacular ink line drawings, as tunefully loose and dy-

namic as the music itself, rarities that only Hilperton, out at grandad's farm, had previously witnessed. The covers of the sheet music are cartoony, some hinting at xenophobic racism, the worst of them a big-lipped black man, top hat, striped pants and a morning coat, wing tip shirt, check waistcoat and polka dot bow tie, wielding a giant cutthroat razor. The background filled with fleeing citizens including a policeman and three chickens. The music is by one Sam Lucas, with words – Song & Chorus – by Prof. W. F. Quown (pronounced coon). Published by White Smith & Company: Boston & Chicago. This gem is titled De Coon Dat Had De Razor.

*I went to a ball the other night,
At Susie Simpkins hut,
Where dem coons all carry razors;
And how dem niggers cut.
Ole Horace Jinks got in a row
With slew foot Johnny Frazier.
Take care, squealed out ole Sally Gum,
Dat coon he got a razor.*

Not many jazz fans about these days, just a few determined fanatics, says Barton. Thirty years ago, or more, this old guy, Dutch I think he was, wore them wooden shoes, came clumping in here regular as clockwork, every Saturday morning. Always had a gem or two or three. Tradin' in rare compact discs, tapes, DVDs, books, magazines and stuff like that. For cash. Even instruments. Once an ancient Conn silver soprano saxophone. He had a weird name. Swainswick Twerton, that's it. Funny accent. Talked non-stop. Came from an abandoned island out there in the channel. Didn't see him now for years. Off he'd go with the cash and buy food from the market shops that still dealt with money; tinned mostly, especially sardines, cases of them, and strong cheese, ro-cambole garlic, and underwear – that thermal stuff. And thick woolly socks. Had a friend on the island. Seems his friend was a star in the olden days. Heard somebody call him a legendary generalist, or something like that. My brother Lawrence and his wife Lillie remember him, bit of a character apparently, by the name of Gurney, Farrington Gurney, played

drums in a dance band. He collected anything to do with jazz, those old New Orleans bands, y'know King Oliver and that, lotsa bebop, especially Charlie Parker, even that weird free improvisation, no tunes, fart and squeak we would laughingly call it. That's what the old guy did. Played avant garde jazz. So it's said. Wall-to-wall CDs, and a library that filled a room. That's all he thought about, was jazz. Old man Twerton would travel back and forth to the island in a bright-painted plywood dinghy, being like a courier for his mate. We never saw him. Folks said he was a hermit, a loner, just couldn't stand being around people anymore. He may still be out there for all I know. We got some of his old stuff in the bin, LP's. Nothin' to play them on though. None of the turntables in here work.

Forty years previous, the storm, two water spouts merging into a tornado, had come from the west, straight over the mountains, around the edge of the lighthouse island thundering up the channel, continuing for two hours at wind speeds measuring more than 100 miles per hour, reducing everything in its path to rubble. Trees twisted – corkscrewed into kindling, roofs disappearing, electricity poles powerless; the wharf lifted from its stanchions, unused for years, the skeletal structure colonised by sea birds nesting among the ruins, sea otter families foraging and grooming among the carapace shadows, the sleek-bodied mink preying on the defenceless.

The blue, red and yellow dinghy, mimicking a traditional Portuguese fishing boat, is marooned between a large rock and a gigantic oily beam. The oars, just visible, laying askew on the saxboard. Tatty, after being abandoned for so many years, the boat, barely recognisable, has shed much of its colour, and the boat's name, Shuffle Boil, peeling, barely readable stick-on gold vinyl letters.

Out across the water, not more than half-

a-mile, just visible, shrouded in fog, the noon-day sun casting an ethereal glow upon the waterway making a soft edge to the trees poking up through the filtering mist, a rainbow catching the northern tip, the tiny island appears as a mirage, an unfulfilled promise. An invisible ancient Daboll trumpet sends a bass clef warning across the slack tide, blaring the mnemonic Elvis's Guitar Broke Down Friday. EGBDF.

Of the three chums only Ashley has seen televised sports, once seeing single sculls, oversized rowers propelling their long skinny toy boats on Dorney Lake near Windsor Castle – an old film of the 2012 Summer Olympics in London, and knows that you row backwards, looking over your shoulder. Dragging Shuffle Boil into the murky polluted water of the commercial harbour, they set out. After a clumsy beginning, the minimal technique of rowing is soon mastered by Hilperton, his sturdy farm labourer's arms pulling at the oars. By the time they reach the rocky shore of the island, water is gradually seeping through the dried out warped planks into the bilge, a shallow pool sloshing around their feet.

There seems to be nowhere to berth, no quay or convenient beach, chalky cliffs rising vertically into the fog, dotted with a variety of caverns, the smaller ones niches for hoards of cormorants, the only suitable place to land a rocky log-strewn bay around the north point, where even there the thick undergrowth has taken over, reaching almost to the water's edge. Protruding from the tangle a snapped in two telephone pole is visible, the top half laying among the bushes – its detached wires dangling, the bottom part an unwelcoming sentinel. Hanging askew from a loose rusted nail is a red-coloured plastic replica of a licence plate, hardly surviving the passage of time, the faded bold capitalised lettering a clear message: **KEEP OUT**. Screwed directly above the sign a metal number all but blending into the pileated woodpecker's holely time-blackened wood. Just to the left of the pole there seems to be a passageway through the brambles. Likely a deer path, says Hilperton, let's give it a try. You first Ashley, you be the smallest.

Once through, zigzagging steps cut into the cliff face take them upward to a neglected

disintegrating road, fissures spreading dangerously toward the edge where a tumbledown shed with a seat, a shelter perhaps, listing, close to falling down, has a mailbox attached to one of its posts, the name F. Gurney still legible. Across the road, their first sign of success, an overgrown path climbing steadily through what must have once been a meadow, the first sign of occupation two collapsed houses, enveloped with small pink wild roses, their perfume filling the air. This ain't it, says Aztec, Barton thought the bloke's house was farther up in the woods, out of sight from prying eyes.

Camille Pissarro would have painted this, a path in the woods, the afternoon light filtering through the archway of fog-shrouded trees – maple, hazelnut, alder and fir crowding a laneway, the constant rain pouring down the slope washing away the topsoil leaving it rutted and potholed, littered with leaves already falling from the deciduous alder, the gentle breeze causing a dappled flickering glimmer through the open spaces, giving the tunnel an otherworldly ambiance, ethereal, an uneasy silence amplifying the adventurers' clumsy progress.

Past another numbered telephone pole, a fork off to the right opens up into a small clearing, the chest-high grass edged with scrappy chaparral. A white-tailed stag looks up from grazing, surprised by the company, lowering his impressive rack of antlers in confrontation before vamoosing, his rapid exit startling a murder of crows in the treetops, setting off a ruckus, an ominous rustling of concealed beasts, a snapping twig, all momentarily curbing Ashley's enthusiasm.

Hilperton sees it first. Look, there, just visible through that gap in the foliage, a stone chimney. Falling apart. Dust to dust.

Pushing through the tangled growth, pausing as though waiting to be welcomed by the legendary jazz collector, as though he would step forward and greet them, forgetting, just for that moment, that he'd been dead these many years, the trio get their first view of the wooden house, sagging, blackened with age, returning to the earth – ashes to ashes, dust to dust – cradled in thorny bushes, some resplendent with juicy blackberries; Scotch thistle, chest-high nettles and tall grass intertwined

with late blooming morning glory disguising its invasive intention with beautiful large white flowers, small trees growing out through the cockeyed window frames – lintels, sills and jambs disjointed, hanging every which-away. Perched on the slanting roof ridge, looking down, quizzically observing them, is Wol, a resident great horned owl, one or another of their parliament being Farrington's guardian throughout his lifetime. You go first, says Ashley, to no one in particular.

Crossing the threshold, they set off a quiet pandemonium of scurrying feet, racing for the corners, away from human intrusion. Rodents, says country-wise Hilperton. Just inside the open double doors, hanging limply from their hinges, Farrington is lounging nonchalantly in a wicker chair, one leg crossed over the other, a Wellington boot dangling incongruously. His dried out Panama hat, oversized on the shrunken skull, is tipped back revealing his bug-filled eye sockets. A smile, though gruesome in death, lingers. What remains of his clothing is threadbare, transparent, showing a shadowy skeleton, home to hoards of spider

families. A startled squeak pops from Ashley's mouth; grabbing hard onto her brother's arm, the shock of seeing her first dead person obliterating all thought of sensible reckoning.

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
(Genesis 3:19)

Changing, as it does in death, to minute particles, merging into unrecognisable entities, Farrington's flesh has blown among the dust of a lived-in studio scattered with the remnants of his life, some hard to distinguish, the details erased by the passing of time, hidden in the shadows, light playing tricks through the slits of the shrunken planks, ghostly optical phenomenon, flitting about the walls as the afternoon daylight disperses through shards of broken glass, dancing with dust motes, suggesting a sepulchre, a resting place. A shrine. The room resonating a Bb7 chord. Thelonious be here, says Aztec, Spectral man, like in a dream.

*I dreamed I had fame and a life sublime,
I dreamed I made prints of the sands of
time.*

*Smack dab in the spotlight, makin' this
wave,*

Man, that was my dream. ^[11]

Everything, the kit of mismatched drums, the wall filled with gongs and cymbals, several enormous leather travelling trunks, drawers filled with mouldy curling yellowing prints of jazz musicians, their celluloid negatives and slides dissolving into silver nitrate phantoms, a wobbly desk and chair, a workbench scattered with tools, soggy, smelly mildewed cardboard boxes filled with CDs glued together by age, totally unplayable, musical instrument cases, boxes of DVDs, tapes, videos, books, everything covered with an undisturbed layer of dust.

Sitting along the wall the upright piano made by *Heintzmann & Co. (Patented • Toronto • 1866)*, is in sad condition, the exposed keyboard sagging a shallow arc. The top is cluttered with piles of sheet music, two concert-

nas and a strange ancient stringed instrument the pear-shaped sound box riddled with wood-worm. Sitting along the music rack, mildewed and faded, are four pieces of music: Hey Good Lookin', Cold, Cold Heart, Jambalay and Blue Moon, their chord sequences written as letters along the bar lines. Three are by Hank Williams, a superstar country singer who had eleven #1 hit songs in the forties and fifties, and Blue Moon, a song sung by Farrington's favourite singer, Billie Holiday ^[12]. Music unfamiliar to Hilperton, Aztec and Ashley. Alfred's Piano Handy Guide illustrating all the fingering positions for piano chords is open at page 14: Ab Bb D F. BeFlatSeven.

On the wall above the piano, the two blown-up poster-size replicas are spattered with spider shit, the original artwork from the cardboard sleeves of the long-playing records on Riverside struggling through. Thelonious In Action is illustrated with a sepia-toned photograph; to the right a silhouette of Johnny Griffin – his tenor saxophone held sideways off his shoulder – listening; tucked down in the left-hand corner, head and shoulders, his face illuminated, sits

Thelonious, his countenance deep inside the unseen piano. Evidencing himself for the three enthralled chums. To the right, Misterioso, the artwork, Giorgio De Chirico's The Prophet, the perfect visual complement for Thelonious's compositions, the red and green figure seated on a box, relaxed, thinking that

to become truly immortal, a work of art must escape all human limits: logic and common sense will only interfere. But once these barriers are broken, it will enter the realms of childhood visions and dreams.

Sat there digging Just A Gigolo.

The old Heintzmann upright piano had not been tuned for years, gradually fading away, much like Farrington himself. He'd been playing the piano, the thousandth variation of Blue Moon - Bb7 - Eb - Cm - Fm7...

Blue Moon

You saw me standing alone

Without a dream in my heart

Without a love of my own

...when this feeling came over him, as though he was segueing into that final performance, shutting down. He pulled his favourite wicker chair out into the archway of the wide open double doors and settled in, looking out at the changing light, the soft evening glow filtering through the trees, an unseen deserted beach stretching away brown to sandstone cliffs set against pastel skies; time, that corny old toe tap for the sake of jazz, at last, no longer common; the clocks melting into pliable shapes, all shades of blue – something lightly spherical, a hawk circling Bolivar the hooded monk, floating, fluttering on lattice-worked cobwebs,

Daliesque, alone wallowing in solipsistic delusion, as though he's the only one who knows, looking out on his way to the Elysian Fields, coming on the Hudson over there in Hoboken, take me off to the ball game, three strikes and you're out.

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust

All alone on stage, no audience knowing. His fading eyesight, watering in the blood-red sunset, the pollution from the fires raging in the far away mountains emphasising the beauty of the glowing orb. Shine on, shine on harvest moon.

*If the liquor don't get him then the
wimmin must*

No more repetition, the dialogue, shackled by the thin veneer of falsity he claimed as originality, ending. A generalist at best, never pushing the boundaries, almost desperate for recognition. Waiting. Waiting.

Oh didn't he ramble, yes he rambled

Looking out there's not much of a view,
the surrounding brambles as tall as the tum-
bledown house, nature's blanket enveloping.
Just the light is all, the glowing orb.

Rambled all around, in and out of town

Sound thundering in his head obfuscates
his friends the birds, those who have acknowl-
edged his egoistic lies without finding fault,
their songs what he'll remember wandering
the Bardo. All the music that's left is Billie sing-
ing – over and over and over and... Bb7 - Eb
- Cm - Fm7 - Bb7 - Eb - Cm - Fm7 - Bb7 - Eb
- Cm - Fm7

Didn't he ramble, oh didn't he ramble

He rambled 'til the good Lord cut him down



References

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- [2] Strange Fruit by Billie Holiday
- [3] Shine On, Harvest Moon, a popular song from the early-1900s credited to the vaudeville team of Nora Bayes and Jack Norworth
- [4] Bats in the Library by Brian Lies
- [5] Silverwing by Kenneth Oppel
- [6] Form ever follows function by Louis Sullivan
- [7] Thelonious Monk, Complete Live At The Five Spot, Riverside Records
- [8] Miles Davis Quintet, The Legendary Prestige Quintet Sessions (Relaxin', Steamin', Workin', Cookin')
- [9] Jazz Today, Buddy 'Chummy' Featherstonhaugh and Harry Klein Et Al., Vocalion
- [10] Kenny Baker, Birth of a Legend '41 - '46, Hep Records
- [11] Monk's Dream, lyrics by Carmen McRae
- [12] Billie Holiday, The First Verve Sessions