

Jerusalem, Jerusalem

by Walter Rufus Eagles

Peter Chenier, Christian-named for the Rock of the Church, Petrus himself, was tall, thin and sixty-five, with short gray hair and a cropped beard. Perhaps "thin" is not the word. Gaunt, instead, from years spent in the rigors of a Cistercian monastery. He was as fit for wilderness survival as John the Baptist was, and for approximately the same reasons. This was appropriate, because he was, in a sense, a renegade monk. He was running, as his counterparts in the Middle Ages, the poet-singers of the Carmina Burana, might customarily have done, from both the law (religious then, secular now) and himself (secular then, religious now).

He was awakened by the first birds and first light of a new part rural and part suburban Southern California August day - a day and a site hailed by realty brochures spawned by printing presses in Calabasas and Cucamonga as the end and, of course, ipso facto, the beginning, of all humankind's search for a nesting place: "neutral" (twenty four Fahrenheit degrees less than body temperature at 5:00 a.m.), a generally negative outlook for rain, and with coastal morning cloudiness glazed across a picture landscape for apparently no other reason than designer decoration.

He lay for a moment under an old scrub oak tree on the hillside, with a dryness in his throat and with a slight stiffness in his joints not of age and arthritis only, but of the unrest that comes from having spent the night on the hard earth in a place almost bare of grass and compact of ages of benign neglect by man, an earth as crusty as he imagined that he himself had become, indeed as he accused himself, in his vestigial nightly penances and in confession, of having become.

Simultaneously, paradoxically, he had begun to feel, in the phrase of Thomas Kempis, "wholly naked" and vulnerable to all, whether elements or humankind or God Himself. He was not, apparently, to have any of the usual small comforts of old age. He had reflected often in the past twenty-four hours that, in another life situation, he might have been said to have earned, at his age, the leisure and the honor, or at least the privilege, to grow old - if not gracefully and with dignity as the scion of some patriarchal clan (that possibility and that path being closed to him many years ago, when he took final vows), then at least cloistered in the love and care of his brothers, the younger monks, under the frugal (since Vatican Council II) oversight of Holy Mother Church.

He imagined, visually first and then felt as well along the edges of a heart not at all dead to sentimentality, that very love extending hierarchically upwards - or perhaps inward, he thought with a smile (a wicked smile he realized as he froze the thing on his countenance, for immediately his conscience scourged him for his vanity in being pleased with the cleverness of his own instant theological insight - which, after all, did not come of his own understanding (as if even that were something in which pride could be taken), but from the Spirit resident within his heart as Counselor.) Self-flagellated, he continued the

exercise of the metaphor, seeing Jacob's Ladder as it extended past His Holiness the Pope and into the stratosphere of the heart of a universe peopled with Trinitarian mystery, *sanctum sanctorum*.

As he lay there, he was aware (disproportionately, as if he himself were part of an enormous drawing, a caricature) of the shape of the hill beneath him, imagining the look, from space, of the curvature of the earth at this knob, blip, on the surface of the planet, feeling suddenly, comfortably, at one with even the gravity of his own specific situation on this orb.

He laughed softly to himself, not a mirror laugh, but the laugh of one who has been too long in the solitary company of his own self. He laughed with only (he thought as the reflex worked again and his consciousness was driven back upon itself) the slightest echo of the sardonic. He had grown old, he would wear the bottoms of his trousers neatly rolled, certainly for no such reason as that of living a well-loved couplet by a fellow, and greater, craftsman. Certainly not for any clear-cut practical reason other than to adjust the length: the roll collected sand-burrs and sand.

He, in his own body, would be an ancient wanderer through the chambers of the sea, a Prufrock of Ages ready to walk out of the depths of a lifetime spent in the service of his Lord, up onto the beach and into the desert, on into the wasteland, to stop where suggested by some transient instinct he could not identify, and to petrify, and then to watch in stone witness through the long centuries until, by the grace of the Almighty, the stinking and marauding hordes, the myriad descendants of Abraham the Patriarch, came up out of Egypt, bellyaching as they moved in rowdy procession, now that distance and time had separated them from even a clear memory of the despotic plight from which their God had extricated them (complaining, as they plodded, of the imagined loss of a Pharaoh's Eden); and he to watch those people from his stony fastness and to hear their cries, and to know their pain, or rather their discomfort (because their suffering was, after all, pathetic when compared to any real trial, such as that of our Lord in his last days of being fully man while fully God, or even that of themselves just a few years before, in Egyptian thrall and shame) and then to find himself splitting asunder in the Lord's own pity of the poor and finding himself pouring forth living waters sent by a desert God to slake the thirst of a people grown cold in the heart, hot in the loins, faithless to their God, and each utterly alone within himself.

A ripe metaphor, and a vile, he accused himself in another impromptu act of contrition: God alone, and no emissary, or at least any conscious one, judges, gives, forgives. His judgements in the past were made out of a sense of justice not to be comprehended by any man contemporaneous with any specific act of judgment, and difficult to understand even (or perhaps, especially) in our own time, from our "perspective" of history. Past was future, the only conceivable chart into that otherwise unmapped sea.

And that gift was usually made out of a bounty or a talent itself proceeding, without name-stamp, copyright or any other surety against ambiguity, from the Eternal. No, he reflected, the only gift he had to give was so small and simple, and not even, really, his to give, that he didn't wonder that no one ever bothered to ask. He could not approach them: he felt unlicensed, unqualified and too flawed with trial and process and the daily attrition

of the romantic hopes and dreams and ideals that amounted to his country's only worthwhile heritage, an attrition that is always a common affliction of any society that has set its sights "beyond" the Eternal covenant of its own birthright and has focused instead, myopically, on the ephemeral, the stylishly personal, the foolishly juvenile, the splash of color that avoids, in horror, the truthful gray.

He felt like an itinerant medieval flagellant wandering about in his ragbag, filthy dotage, or, better still, like an old sea crab, of about the same speed and limited sphere of action - craggy, wrinkled and increasingly metamorphosed to the crustacean in spite of the considerable amount of exercise he got shambling across the face of a planet that, much of the time lately, he knew could not possibly be his home, filled with grace though it be.

In these ancient mountains, Malibu Hills, he awakened feeling himself to be of one substance with the earth and all of its fruits, and (as it would feel to a younger man bewitched by the ancient mother in her springtime juvenescence) in almost alarming ways. His tousled hair and the loose leaves, differing, indeed, from each other in many respects, were one in his mind, and not because of his faulty memory of Walt Whitman verse and some slippage of image from *Leaves of Grass* to this hill near the California coast, but because it had all been a part of him - his hair, the excrescence of a surplus of protein nowhere near as abundant now as in his youth, and the leaves, the leavings of this parent tree above him now.

Sheltering truly, body and mind, mind and soul, a metaphorical reference to a hovering and endearing mother, the oak spread its arms wide above and about him. He felt a direct and altogether umbilical tie to the root and stock of David planted here upon this California inland slope - not a link to his own good mother, brought in her own good time to this fallow earth, nor even to the earth goddess latent in the mind of any who ponder benign nature, but to the mother of us all, know it not or not, Mother of the Word, Queen of Heaven, Mary Immaculate, Mary Virgin, wholly pure and a contradiction for all ages, for all the betrayed and betraying, corrupt and dying generations since that golden age (more golden than Byzantium) when Life and Love walked upon the earth in the physical presence, and nothing afterwards would ever be the same, His Kingdom come: "You, my child, shall abide under the shelter of the God of Heaven; beneath the shelter of his wings shalt thou trust."

He lay on the curve of the earth and dreamed for a few moments, watching the wordless, soundless shifting of a slide-show cast pale against the inside his forehead: not the glory of Michelangelo nor the tenderness of Raphael, but the scale destruction and the strangeness of Holbein the Younger - the tree above him now within his mind existing in the same grayness of dawn but with the sense of scale enormously distorted, the trunk massive not in size only but also in the weighted Presence of something utterly Other and alone - something over-against, something strong and just and loving beyond the capacity of his or anyone else's mind or heart to imagine - something, some One whom he now suspected it would never be his lot or his joy to face in this existence except through Saint Thomas Aquinas and the Apostle Paul's veil, darkly.

He knew that this was a special morning for him, if not for the birds and for the light and

for the tree and its leaves, that the days had been becoming increasingly short and intense for him - that even as his skin wrinkled incredibly, even as the bones calcified in an (actually) audible way, even as his walk became slower and more unsteady, his mind became clearer, as if purged of all or anyway a large part of its excess baggage, its distractions and delusions and its heartless, self-betraying and self-centered passions.

He also did not think he would "lie down thin," as Dylan Thomas himself must have known, within his own suicidal heart, that he himself would never do even as he conjured the possibility. Nor would he would become so light, as some of God's people sometimes conceived some of our saints, so "purified", that he would simply waft skywards upon some updraft of spirit into the heavenly host, already appareled for a musical eternity of evening dress, his lungs bursting with new air, his throat and diaphragm ready to sustain the vast unending chord, the diapason closing full and not on Man but Maker.

He felt the fullness of his own weight, rather, and knew his own lack of enmity with the Mother that gave him the earth, water, air and fire, of which his body was originally compounded and into which it would soon return, dust of the eternal ages. Gravity was not his enemy: his foe, still deadly and still poised back in the night from which he had always just come - his foe, like his God, was both of him and apart from him, and he suspected now that he would never be given to know the "great gulf fixed," nor even in what sacred or profane arenas of immortal combat he had either established or dis-established himself - not, at any rate, this side of the Judgement. "Just as well," he said aloud to his God on the other side of Malibu Hills, "You've seen it all, You know best. Whatever You say. I'm too tired to argue, anyway."

He lay within the leaves he had piled upon himself last night when he took refuge under this tree. For Peter, the time when he was just awakening had become, in recent years, a time as meditative as the time just before sleep, so that for him, sleep was braced, before and after, with prayer - sometimes free in form, at other times with the strictness of a well-loved and long-ago- memorized psalm with its impromptu antiphon and concluding *Gloria Patri*. Now, with a sigh of resignation, he acknowledged that the prayer, such as it was, was over. He stood up, stretched, and shook the leaves off his clothes.

He looked down at himself as if to take the customary lifelong inventory of his apparel and of the representation he was about to make to the world he was about to enter - a leftover association from many years of public service of one kind or another, including especially the years in the monastery, when he felt very much a public person. A few of the monks, especially the older ones, had come to exist in a world not public and not private but simply neutral, where neither state existed or mattered; he had heard Father James fart, once or twice, shortly after the morning Office and before the old man had left the chapel - a bent man, gray, a saintly confessor who, for years, had been issuing the same penances to the young monk-penitents who came to him, no matter the offence - as if he himself, in his own youth, had been listening especially hard to the inner voice of the readings from Cardinal Newman about the graveness of even the most venial sin, and had subsequently leveled the gradations of all the maddeningly infinite variety and paradoxical and boring similarity of the world of sin in his mind to an egalitarian plateau.

His clothes looked every bit as old as he himself felt - old, wrinkled, indeterminate of

form and undemonstrative of image and distinctly faded of chroma and of most of the other conventional manifestations of beauty, propriety, success and the like, but somehow, paradoxically, of increased but inchoate utility: he himself was also more useful now, today, than at any previous time in his life - but for what? It was a point of faith rather than analysis, and hence the occasional self-query: To what end did he labor - *had* he labored - what end even faintly recognizable to a people increasingly, almost unbearably, real to him, but to whom he was becoming an ectoplasm, an about-to-never-have-been, the socially invisible, the *old*?

O my people, he mused. *Popule mei*. How I would love to take you in my arms, to gather you into my bosom, to be a lover to you, for you and with you and in you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Come to my arms, my beamish boy! Let us be true to one another....

Enough. Amen, and enough. A good feeling, a wrong feeling. A self-justifying and unredeemed self-stroking, a masturbation of the spirit: Mariana in the moated grange forever pining, rapt in the tragedy of her own forsaken beauty even as that loveliness slumped its finely graduated way inevitably, time-bound, downwards, toward earth and its gravitational field of longing and tugging, and away from the chivalric and heavenly romance of her puerile daydreams.

Time to get about, to shake the dust from his feet and get on with his journey. He had a long way to walk. And walk it would be: no fellow-traveler would pick him up, no one would give him a lift - or at least he had had no luck so far.

It had taken him two full days to get as far out of L.A. as he had gotten by last nightfall, and that by walking the Mulholland Highway when the bus had dropped him off in the Hollywood Hills. He didn't mind the highway: it was a relic, like himself, a reminder to those motorists who traveled its path down the ridge of the mountain range towards Ventura (and these were very few other than the immediate local residents, lovers' lane children and wanderers on foot lost in the hills without a Thomas map of the city) of a time probably better forgotten, a time of Shirley Temple's childhood, of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Pilgrimage Theater and the Hollywood Bowl and the Hollywood Palladium and Pop's Willow Lake, of Angels' Flight before angel dust, of Baby Snooks, Rinso White and Rinso Blue, *ad* nearly *infinitum*.

There was even one long stretch near the University of Judaism where the highway had never been paved, but became a graveled, one-lane, rutted road with sprigs of grass growing out of the slightly mounded hump between the ruts. Only the hardiest vegetation grew there, in that place of no irrigation, precious little rainfall, and a ground water table impossibly distant down below. Each solitary scraggly desert plant clutched the rocky earth with all the tenacity of a chicken hawk sinking its talons into a baby jack-rabbit in preparation for a freight-flight back to the ravening and strident maws of its nested young.

You had to walk this road, unless you had a jeep or a dirt vehicle or wanted a broken axle. And walk it he did, down its long traversal of the mountain range, until he arrived at the one tree on a hill otherwise barren of all but the hardiest grasses and weeds, where

he had bedded down for the night. The mountains here were lower, flat, old topography. He felt at home here, as if he had wandered into an old Gene Autry set and even into that world itself, where the only threat came, not from nature, which was as static and dependable as the need for a steady and natural light source was predictable, but only from man the predator, and from precious few of those, however malign, in a world that was always underpopulated and, except for occasional raids by rapacious and always conquerable villains, bucolically beatified and thoroughly musical.

How different, he thought, from the mountains where he had started his trek, in Hollywood Hills. It had been a moving vista on which he had looked out last afternoon from the craggy range before he passed the Jewish university. From those heights he had looked down upon a city that the mountains themselves had formed by splitting away a people, those of the San Fernando Valley, now called "Valleys" by some of L.A.'s lower denizens, from those who lived on the other side of the range, hereafter called (by the natural enemies of those same denizens) "Angelenos." From that height the Valley seemed distant, orderly, even clean (like whitewashed graves in the sun, he had reflected).

Much later, as he continued to walk further out of the city, he would see the smog layer that was the corona of reddish-brown filth with which the city had crowned itself. But now the smog was everywhere, even on the mountain road, and so they all, he himself included, tended to forget it was there, in much the same way that residents living in the flight path of one of the several airports of the city would inevitably become oblivious to the constant thunder of planes departing and landing almost in their backyards.

Now it was a new day, though. He had begun again, and another day's journey lay ahead of him. He suspected that the police had issued an All Points Bulletin, and so he had taken the less-traveled way as a matter of course. He knew that he would need to confirm his suspicion about the APB as soon as possible, but only when it could be done in safety. He knew also, from having traveled to Malibu Park a few years back, that one or two U.S. Forestry Rangers staffed the park offices and that they would be in radio communication with the area law-enforcement agencies.

Whether it was because he was getting old, or because he was running scared, he seemed to be getting clumsy, at least so he thought, and just now he fell headlong for a short distance down the hill on which he had slept, his fall being terminated long before he reached the bottom of the hill as he fell into a bramble-bush. A moment later, pain shot through his body, into its farthest reaches, like the summer lightning that lays its instant nerve network across the night sky but the significance of which is not felt until the thunderclap arrives seconds later. However, even as the acme of pain arrived, a larger matter took precedence. Through habit inculcated by the harsh fact of his circumstance as a fugitive of late, the first thing he did on getting to his feet was to look around in all directions from his crouched position (it was hard, because of an old back injury, for him to stand up straight immediately from any prone or seated position) to see if he had been observed. He immediately felt foolish: there was no one within miles, probably.

He found again the cowpath that had taken him to the hill last night, and he continued along its bovine way, knowing unconsciously the laziness of whatever cows had trod it into

permanence, that it was indeed the path of least resistance - that no engineering firm with any amount of equipment and with however skilled a staff could have discovered a more efficient route across the foothills, between the Scylla of the highways with their ever-present motored dangers, and the Charybdis of the unmanageable jagged peaks of the mountains themselves: he had learned to trust the judgement of most domesticated animals (at least the rural varieties) and many of the wild ones as well.

And it was just there, a few yards west of the hill on which he had slept the night before, at a spot he would remember forever, where the cowpath veered slightly down the slope towards a ravine, where the path itself led between two rocks about hip high to Peter, that he heard the shot and realized that something like a concentrated and vengeful force had slammed into his buttock a split-second before and had knocked him down against the rock on the right side of the path. He hit the rock and slid off into a shallow declivity beside it.

Lucky that he did, for now he heard two more shots in succession, heard the immediate impact on the rock behind which he now lay instinctively still, frozen of all motion, and felt the spray of the limestone flakes and dust. A moment later, he heard the sound of someone running through the brush, running away from where he lay still and waited until all was quiet again.

The pain from the wound was real, was constant, and, one would have thought, was the only possible thing for his mind to dwell on. But now, his thoughts and concern lay in the spreading warmth in the area, the warmth and the wetness. Then he knew why: he was bleeding, and the spreading of the fluid he was feeling on the insides of his thighs was telling him the extent of the bleeding. He had to stop the flow. Now his hand dropped down to his buttock, and he pressed down as hard as he could, in spite of the pain. He had to find a way to stop the flow without bandages.

How to do so out here in the open country was another matter. He knew about cobwebs and soot - items available on any rural farm worthy to be called a farm. But here? He looked around him, knowing he would not find anything useful, but looking anyway twice, three times in his immediate area in the repetitive way people will do. And then, almost (it seemed) because he wanted to find it so badly, there it was.

He almost didn't notice it at first: a clump of brush that was really not brush at all, but the lightning-struck top of a scrub oak that had been split out of the top of an old tree nearby in some electrical storm. It lay on its side, dry and yet still full-leaved. He crawled over to it, trying to keep the buttock from flexing as he did, the blood now covering his hand that he kept pressed down in a nearly vain attempt to stanch the flow. He crawled up under the fallen debris, saying a special prayer to St. Patrick.

He made his sign of the cross in his mind only, since it was his right hand that was holding the blood inside him and he couldn't let go. Even so, flex as little as he might, the twenty yards of dragging his body to the treetop had renewed the blood flow about his hand. He lay still now, and concentrated mentally on his buttock, on the flow of the blood, on his own hand's pressure. But always there was the ambience of pain, screaming for his attention, as if he weren't doing enough already. Soon, though it was not in their usual

fine hum that they were singing their rather unvaried carol, his nerves began to calm, and his mind fixed itself on the wound, and on the pressure point, and on the clotting. Now, however, just successfully arrived at that state of mental concentration that, he felt, would give a fair psychocybernetic-*cum-Sancto-Spiritu* healing run for his body's money, he saw the first cobweb as he lay looking upwards through the dry leafed network. Then another.

And then several at once. All within arms reach, and thickly ungossamer, not delicate at all, but a delight to his eyes for all that, and indeed because of that. They would be perfect to stanch the blood, the thick gobs of them, if he could gather enough of them - and it looked likely. He took a quick inventory of the locations of the webs with several sweeps of his vision, then lay back down flat for a moment now that he had a plan in mind. He relaxed more fully now than he would have thought possible. So a plan had really been mainly what was needed. But whose?

He lay quietly, and now, for the first time since he had been shot, he puzzled: Who would have done it? Why? Because if it had been the L.A.P.D., or the Sheriff's deputies, surely they wouldn't have shot in the first place, or if they had, they would have verified the shooting, would have walked right up and stood over him, surrounding him, looking down at him prone on the ground behind the rock; then one of them without a signal from the others would have knelt beside his body and taken his pulse or noted the lack of one, would have lifted his eyelids and tested for vital signs, and would have bent over to listen to his heart. Isn't that what they all did? Even the S.W.A.T. teams?

So it wasn't the police, he thought. But if not the police, then it had to be vandals, hoodlums with no motive whatsoever save that of random and senseless violence. And if so, then they were cowards of one sort or another not to come up to him as he lay stricken, and torment him further, to kick him with their motorcycle boots. God, he was letting it get out of hand. These were all demons of the mind - the vandals as well as the S.W.A.T. men.

Enough of all of that. The root of most sin lay in the imagination, in the fertile mind that could conceive evil alternatives to what God through the action of the Holy Spirit had implanted in the conscience. Let the bridle loose only a trifle, and a headstrong horse will bolt in the most idle circumstance, let alone in a full-out crisis.

And then the thought came to him, and maybe it was the Devil himself bringing it: wasn't he after all in a sort of wilderness desert? - that, perhaps, the shots came by design, all three of them. The first to intentionally wound him, the second two to intimidate, to warn, to stop him from reaching his goal. But what was his goal? He had not the slightest idea. He knew his purpose, but not his goal: the former was to flee, the way an animal, when given chase, will do. The latter? He hadn't had time to sort it out - too much energy had been expended in the flight itself to allow him the luxury of circumspection.

He had lain there long enough, still enough, he thought, to be ready to get on with the next phase of the operation. He winced a little at the choice of words - in wry, almost bitter, reflection. Beneath the pressure of his hand, the blood had stopped flowing enough so that it didn't seem wet and warm in anything like the same way as before. There was no longer any feeling in his hand, but still he held it forcefully into the penumbra of pain, blood, cloth and muscle of his butt, like the little Dutch girl holding her finger in the dyke

to keep the waters of the Atlantic away from Holland.

Looking overhead again, he located in his mind the various clumps of cobweb. Then, and with much more than the usual lower back pain, he straightened up to a sitting position, still maintaining the pressure with his numb right hand, inching his body slowly upright with the cantilever of his left arm, each inch a mechanical ratchet step away from the bemused safety of his previous prone and calmed position, and into a storm of gathered, focused and adamant pain that was no longer localized in any sense, but seemed to flow not only to his brain, in permeation of his consciousness, but into the landscape itself, the earth, the sky, the universe.

By any logic he should have fainted dead away and fallen back, dazzled blind and senseless by the fireworks of it all, the crazed lightning that sprang dimensionless across the farthest reaches of the visual theater of his brain. He did not do so. He stayed in place, fixed in his mental resolve and muscular instruction and, after a moment of rest, pushed himself through the final zenith of accumulated trauma, into a fully upright sitting position. In spite of the pain, he smiled, anyway grimaced, at his achievement.

Then he began gathering the cobwebs all that were within arms' reach. He scooped them down as if they were some dawn-dewed and -silvered Golden Fleece, and raked their clingy softness onto a broad, dry leaf. When he had harvested all that were within reach, he paused for a moment to judge whether or not the amount he had so far collected would be enough to pack the wound.

In trying to visualize the bullet-hole, he suddenly saw not one hole, but two - an entrance and an exit. It was almost too much to hope for: if it were so, however, then the bullet was no longer in his body, laying there keeping the gluteus maximus open around its own deadly lead-poisonous self, at the end of a small tunnel leading to the polluted air and airborne filth of an exterior world rampant with bacteria.

It seemed to him a long shot that any of this attempt of his would work - that he would be able to stem the flow of blood, that he would be able to ward off infection long enough to seek the help of a doctor (as he knew he must: even if the bullet did pass through his buttock and out the other side, the path it left was probably lined with a sub-microscopic coating of lead and bacteria already at work attacking the cells of his own body), and finally that (even if he should reach help) his Samaritan would understand that he was no criminal and would resist the impulse to call the police.

Good God! he thought, almost expelling as a verbal projectile what was for him a vernacular affirmation of faith, and not an expletive. What was he doing? - tempting God? Had it ever been so, during all of this, that he had had any real options, any valid choices? Or wasn't it all, rather, inevitable and immutable? - his problem sometimes to see the road that he must take, and at other times to discern the path to avoid, but never to be forced to decide at the fork in the road: God grant him the clarity of vision to see, not the road he might take, but the road he must. The illusion of the former lay just one step beyond such thoughts as, "This probably won't work," such visualizations as had brought him the images, first of the S.W.A.T. team and then of the jackbooted leather boys.

Resting in just such a way, each time having a dialogue with the still voice that came

into him, he gathered, after two hours, enough cobwebs, he believed, to clot the blood flow once he had stopped his hand pressure. The process had taken much too long - a fact that he knew, not because of his watch (he had none), nor because of the advancement of the sun through the heavens (the sky was overcast), but because his right arm and wrist and hand had become stiff from the long application of pressure upon the wound, and he had had to sit on his hand to relieve his arm muscles for several alternating periods.

Now, suddenly exhausted, he lowered himself back into a supine position, this time with his hand between his buttock and the earth. He only needed to doze, he thought, and that for just a moment or two. He lay for a moment in that captive torpor just before sleep, when the body slips into a gently passive physical state leaving the mind's eye witness to a spectrum of color and form as complex and imaginative as it is devoid of logical sequence and order.

Graphic images emerged, metamorphosed in stately passage into variants now, and then again into a different order of reality altogether: first a garden of splendid multiflora and a saturation of chroma unseen otherwise in this world save in the special visions of the schizophrenic or the prophet or the user of psychedelic drugs, and then the bucolic scene changes by imperceptible degrees into a city park, with a bench and a bum and with a heightening of color in the vagrant's rags and even the grass of the park's lawns and fields until, caught unawares, the unbodied and unselfconscious viewer sees that it all has become a celestial palace quite as unearthly as any actual palace with its crystal capturing of a light that never was or ever will be this side of paradise - a palace peopled, in a primitive Grecian *horror vacui*, with a hundred or more faces and figures standing about as if at a festive gathering, and each face, as it received the attention of the viewer, the face of one he had known, assembled, together with its neighbors, in no meaningful tableau likely ever to have occurred, but in a random gathering as socially diverse as it was glowingly pictorial in a ruthlessly plebeian glorification of the base, reification of the vapid, and simplification of the exalted - in short, a Peaceable Kingdom of humankind, come not to Earth's pastoral meadows but to Beowulf's banquet hall.

When he awoke again, incredibly, hours had passed; mercifully, however, the sun was out, having burned through the usual early morning overcast and, though near the western mountainrange, had at least a couple of hours of life and light in it. And a couple of hours should give him time enough. When he began to stretch to revive the circulation, though, suddenly he was back with his body again, with the thing demanding all his attention. He lay back down again, not revived, not better for having slept, and dreamed again and again - celestial, terrestrial, undisturbed flowing of phantasm, color and peace.

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