

The image features a 3x3 grid of a man's face, which is dimly lit and has a dark, grainy texture. A thick red horizontal bar runs across the middle of each row, partially obscuring the man's eyes. The text is overlaid on the grid in a bright green, serif font.

Lune Fiction

Issue No 21

Nausea



Lune Fiction Issue 21 (6th February 2009)

Lune Fiction - where dreams and nightmares never came true.

Nausea

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Published by © Humble Texts

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Comments, advice, contributions and donations are no longer
required (for the time being).

All messages that we receive will be given a knighthood.

Eating alone is like dying alone.

ISSN 1754-7172

This is the last issue for the foreseeable future.

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There is always light at the end of the tunnel - just be wary of
who's travelling behind you.

JMdV



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and some haikus

Editorial

My dear friends,

At 7pm on Friday 5th December, under cover of darkest night, a hearse slid stealthily out of the gloomy streets of Lancaster, followed by a procession of ghouls, demons and clowns. In the hearse was a coffin made of oak and plywood containing the body of me, Humble Sam, the executive editor of Lune Fiction and father to a not inconsiderably large number of tiny porkers, who had died three days previously fixing a hole (so that the rain couldn't get in). In the car were an Outer-Hebridian Couple (or were they Upper-Bavarian?) who had once shared a picnic with me, the wife and an anarchic Portuguese Christian-Catholic monk who was my best friend.

They drove 66 km south, then 12 miles east, had a drink at a rather pleasant pub, drove back to Lancaster and then north to my favourite cemetery on the outskirts of the city near the lunatic asylum where the ghouls, demons and clown were going anyway. My grave had already been dug by Mungo the local Anglican vicar on a plot I had bought on e-bay a couple of weeks earlier. The small group huddled around the grave, and the monk and the priest argued over who was to conduct

the service. The wife eventually resolved the situation by doing something rather nasty to both men and conducted the service herself. It was bitterly cold and the black of the night sky contrasted with the whiteness of the wife's face.

She has this thing about leeches.

Shortly before midnight, as the ghouls, demons and clowns were assembling to walk down to town to scare the Bejesus out of drunken folk, my coffin was lowered into the ground and the sombre ceremony was over. The wife, the vicar and the Upper-Bavarian (or were they Outer-Hebridian?) couple walked away silently to the car, while the monk chose to stay on to desecrate some graves for a laugh. I was gone, finito, kaputt. Good-bye, and thanks for all the acorns.

However, on Sunday 7th December at 1pm I got bored so I resurrected myself before the news of my demise would spread like wildfire among the woodland and farmyard creatures of the world, for my death and burial had been so closely held a secret that not even the fish in my aquarium were aware of my absence.

And there we have it! Fêtes & fireworks, fêtes & fireworks, eh?

So welcome to yet another edition of Lune Fiction, incidentally the last one.

Walk in the light and drop the dead donkey,



Humble Sam

Letters to the Editor

Sam!

The other night I dreamt that your fish were trying to tell me something.

They were swimming around excitedly in their fish tank and reaching for the surface and mouthing words to me. Obviously I could not understand them, and they got more and more frustrated. Eventually, the larger of the two females split in two and her left half jumped out, nudged me, poked me, prodded me and jumped back into the water. Then her two halves slotted back together and she was one again.

Best wishes,

Anonymous

Dear Humble Sam,

I have been a gardener since I was little for I was brought up on the outskirts of Maidstone in the garden of England, a haven for the amateur gardener. Gardening is very much in my blood.

Upon moving house recently - I now live in Braintree - I joined a local gardening group whose chairman had recently become ill and whose position I took over. "A way of initiation", I was told.

A few months down the line, I was delighted to inform the group of a letter from Radio Four accepting our request to join the audience for a recording of Gardeners' Question Time to be held at Braintree's flower & produce community centre on December the fourth.

I was not prepared for the ordeal I was to suffer.

Upon arrival at the community centre on 4th December, I was horrified to find the members of our group wearing hot-pants, thigh-high leather boots, bustiers

and those awful aprons that show a cartoon image of someone in their underwear. I was assured this was 'normal' and that I shouldn't be so 'stuffy'. When we trooped into the centre to take our seats, I found that the rest of the audience was dressed improperly too.

After the introduction to the distinguished panel, most of whom were also wearing inappropriate clothing, questions began and what came next was a torrent of smut.

The first question to be asked was by Miss Sheila O'Hara, a member of my group. She gave her name as Mrs. Pimplebottom, which caused a ripple of juvenile laughter around the audience, and she said: "I've got a large bush. When is the best time to crop it?" Well, it seemed a plain enough question to me, but again it caused a ripple of laughter.

"Mrs Pimplebottom", came the reply. "Many women like you have quite a large bush. Do you find your husband often goes in there and has a poke around?"

"Oh yes", she replied, "He likes getting his tools out and digging deep."

I suddenly realised where I was: the tenth circle of the *Inferno*, a 'Carry On' hell.

"Mr. Gimp, Redditch. I have a stump that used to be quite fruitful and was the wonder of my group. But now it's just a useless old thing that's dried up. What should I do?"

"I suggest you keep it in a warm moist dark place."

I resigned myself to the laughter.

"Miss Vulva, Wimbledon. My blossoms are very big, but I would like them to be even bigger. They always win competitions, but I know some gardeners have

even bigger ones than me. My fiancé says they are lovely and the best blossoms he's ever seen. What do you suggest I do?"

"Some people talk to them. Some people make sure they get plenty of sunlight. Touch them often and make sure they get plenty of attention."

And so on.

It was quite an education, for never have I been witness to such a frenzy of smut. People north of the Thames really are vulgar.

Thank you for letting me share that with you.

Yours faithfully,

Burt Harrison

Sir,

Can rational thought alone reveal the mystery of being? Does pure reason see all there is to see? Is the Socratic notion of a 'wise man' solely dependent on pure thought achievable? Can the mind triumph over body & soul and lead us into a state of spiritual fulfilment? Are we happy? Can we be happy? Are you happy? Is life one long chain of events that can be perceived to be fortunate if one has no desires, no needs and no aspirations? Who knows...

I do know that we perceive the world through our imagination, and our lives are determined not by our mind but by the relentless drive of our wills for better and greater things: always setting new goals, always arranging new tasks. Yes, life is suffering, and there is only one solution to break the wheel of misery: the rejection of the will to live through the pure non-worldly contemplation of existence through the arts in general, music in particular and, of course, Lune

Fiction, the best medication against the desolation of being.

Yours sincerely,

Arthur Schopenhauer

PS Porcupines, when they are cold, try to cuddle up to warm one another but when they get too close their needles hurt each other so much that they run away. However, then they are cold again. So they try to cuddle up again. This goes on till they have found the optimal distance to warm one another without hurting each other.

Humans are similar: they can't live on their own but they can't stand each other so they get on with one another through decency and good manners.

PPS Now that Lune Fiction is defunct, I can be a right misery again.

Sam,

Last night I dreamt that I was looking at the fish in your tank. The water was translucent but dark - not threatening and gloomy, but mystical. I noticed that there was something wrong with Gill, the largest of your fish, and that the other two seemed to be growing. Laura then came up to me and said that Gill was dying and there was nothing I could do: she was old and her time on Earth was running out. I was sad but agreed with Laura. Gill had had a long and good life and we decided to celebrate it rather than mourn her impending demise. We were merry and laughed and Laura remembered the time we stuck Gill in a bird cage which she hated as she was a fish and couldn't fly. After the celebrations, we watched Gill gently fall asleep and die (a bit like Hazel in *Watership Down*).

Slightly mournfully, I turned to look at the two other fish in their fish tank where the water was a translucent sky blue and bloody hell! They were enormous and radiated a heavenly light that was both blinding and benign.

Kind regards,
Anonymous

Nausea

Haiku No 1

*I need to find home
 I need a decent shelter
 From trolls in the head*

Nausea I

Oh hail Mother Hoar & Father Frost; Winter is here at long last. Oh hail Sister Ice & Brother Rime; December is here.

I used to wake up and feel uncomfortable. I started to cough; I started to retch. I would get up, rush to the bathroom and vomit. Green and yellow bile, for there was nothing else in my stomach. I would cough and gag for the next few minutes. Then I would get up, clean myself and make a cup of tea.

I drank it, forcing my stomach to accept what I had to offer, for I had nothing else to pacify it with. All the humours had gone.

My Home

The dark cold grotto of a house stands next to the second-hand book shop Ex-Libris opposite the Golden Lion. It was my home, where only Baroque recorder concertos could provide me with any consolation. An uninviting place it was and what a heartless house it was. Cars drove past on the high street, up to the city centre and down to the docks. Whores and drunkards patrolled outside at night. A Georgian house built in 1784,

it had been renovated with the least possible care. I hated it. My ex-girlfriend had thrown me out and this was all the city council could provide me with.

Light bulbs: crackle, crackle; blend in, blend out. Bathroom: a small affair with a toilet reeking of sewage. Furniture: dull post-war rubbish. Kitchen: a basin and that was it. Windows: heavy locks with even heavier bolts. Not worth opening. Living room: long grey stains on the ceiling and walls. My stereo set: damaged beyond repair. Bedroom: hideous, sad, I felt alone.

Positioned on the edge of the town centre, the house had been built for the bourgeoisie of the late 18th century. Designed to be practical yet homely, it had incorporated all the facilities of a Georgian house. Now it is a run-down made-up historic building for social low-life. My predecessor had been a junkie and made a living by selling hard drugs. He enjoyed life by raping young women. The neighbours didn't miss him. They did not take kindly to me either except for some small kids who would visit me and ask me whether I was a homosexual, as I didn't have a girlfriend. I played with them and learnt to ignore their questions.

I did not like my home.

Home I

*A red omnibus
 Smelling of stale fish 'n' chips
 Drives down the wet street*

Nausea II

When I would wake up, my mind was at peace; my mind was at one and my stomach churned away. It would say 'Empty me, empty me'.

I tried to ignore it.

I fought, and I resisted. But not for long. I would get up and empty the contents of

my innards by retching. Green and yellow bile would descend into the toilet bowl.

I cried; I coughed. Then I would splutter, focus my eyes and throw up a little bit more. To make sure I was empty of all humours.

My Dad

I did not mind that my father had a girlfriend whom he wanted to marry. I did not mind that my father, a man of 61 years of age, was interested in a woman 22 years his junior. I did not mind that my father still wanted an active love life. I wanted him to be happy. What bothered me is that three weeks after my mother's heart-attack, my father had chosen to show affection to another woman. What bothered me was that three months after his wife's death, my father announced the engagement at a dinner party. We had all known that my mum had been seriously ill.

Biff, bang, boom; I used to hit my head on the drab black desk, a present from my father for my 21st birthday. Biff, bang, boom; I used to kick the honourable Georgian walls. Biff, bang, boom; I would collapse in a heap on my bed. My dad never realised how much his children didn't like him.

What a stud, father of five children, he complained about his stomach ulcers and watched his wife descend into alcoholism. What a man; his wife came out of hospital, sorted out her affairs and lay down in the marital bed to die. I was the last one to see her alive. Afterwards, my father still wanted to be my friend.

Home II

*Look! A red ship floats
On the grey, cold Ijsselmeer
Waiting to sail home*

Nausea III

The cramps were the worst part of my nausea. My stomach and the rest of my innards contracted and cramped. The pain shot through my body. I tried to vomit that little bit more but nothing would come out of it. Usually. I reckon there was a success rate of 1 in 9.

I didn't care. When I was in the bathroom, leaning over the toilet, I just wanted to throw up. I wanted to get rid of the pain.

My Job

Dring, Dring, Dring went my phone. Pointless, really. You see, I didn't work. I had smashed both my hands in a car accident. My friend, may he rest in peace, was pissed. Was I too lazy, too selfish to get a normal job with regular working hours? Who am I to judge myself? My doctor said I was incapable of work. My physiotherapist said I had to learn to look after myself. My councillor was worried I might harm myself. Yes, harm myself. Scratch away at my arms and legs with my sharpened fingernails. I loved biting my tongue; blood would trickle down my limbs. Had to get rid of the humours. I loved banging my head against the walls of my Georgian domicile, waiting for my head to crack. It felt soooooo good. I would have loved to jump off bridges and fly, crashing into the ground below at a high speed. I wish I could have done that and not let reason overtake me. At least I had a desire; at least I had a dream to live for.

I used to go to the bathroom several times a day. I would look into the mirror, leave the bathroom, sit down in the living room, get up, go to the bathroom, look into the mirror, leave the bathroom,

sit down in the bedroom, get up, go to the bathroom, look into the mirror, leave the bathroom, sit down in the sitting room, get up, go to the bathroom, look into the mirror, leave the bathroom, sit down in the bedroom, get up, walk to the bathroom, look into the mirror, leave the bathroom, sit down in the lounge and wonder what it was I saw in the mirror. I didn't have a job. Maybe I was lucky? Dring, Dring, Dring went the non-existent phone on my desk next to the wilted plastic flowers.

Intermission

At night, when you look closely at the sky, you can see them travelling between planets, stars, galaxies and across the universe. They have been to see me but refused to take me away. Their spaceship is a huge bauble of a vehicle. They have six digits on their hands and no word for regret. Their mission is to study intergalactic happiness, examine the many aspects of universal joy. They have no word for desire and five digits on their feet.

Beady eyed, tall and gaunt, they thought I was an interesting enough specimen to study. They showed me astonishing tricks of magic; they told me of the various sentient beings that exist. They even showed me the interior of their flying space vehicle.

I liked them. Shame they wouldn't take me with them. Then I could have gone travelling between planets, stars, galaxies and across the universe.

Home III

*A Swiss brown grazes
Under the red sun setting
On the mighty Alpstein*

Nausea IV

The first few minutes of my daily exis-

tence were not dissimilar to the big bang: the universe wanted to explode and unravel; I wanted to empty and purge myself.

The contractions were natural, completely devoid of any reasoning. I was forced to empty the contents of my innards. I retched, I vomited, I gagged and I threw up. There was always that feeling that some deity controlled me like a puppet and I had no say in how my body should act.

Like the universe, I had no control over my behaviour.

My Home II

The uninviting house stands on its own, isolated from all the other surrounding buildings. Next to a book shop where I once used to work and next to a pub I used to frequent, the house is as grey as historic buildings could impossibly be. Devoid of any decorations and Spartan in terms of furniture; it was my home, my abode. I tried to spend as little time as possible in it but it kept on pulling me back. The walls were white; the mood was dark.

I tried to piss myself to get rid of the humours.

Jump, jump, jump: I wanted to jump high but the crazies always seemed to get to me. Shout out in joy, wear colourful clothes that will blind your fellow men and kiss every single girl you meet, that's what I wanted to do. But the black dog would bark and remind me of my rightful disposition. Scream and scrub yourself clean, I told myself but despondency would order me to sit down, get up, go to the bathroom, look into the mirror and sit down again.

I had a very comfy chair.

The spectre of my predecessor sat in

every nook and cranny of my home. Sepulchrally, his voice would call out to me from all four corners of the flat. I tried not to listen but it was hard not to. He would tell me that it was my master. The voice claimed it was better to burn out than it is to rust. It was quite comforting, as at least somebody had my best possible interests at heart.

Home IV

Bleached bones and strange beasts

On the Mathilda Highway:

Eucalyptus stinks

Nausea V

What did I do after I had thrown up? It seems that my body did not feel that satisfied with the outcome of my endeavours: I had to retch that little bit more. I strained myself; I forced myself to throw up again. It was painful. My eyes got wet, my stomach was exhausted with effort and my soul was drained of vigour. If there was a successful outcome, I was happy. If not, I beat myself up. Then I would set my mind to rest and get on with life. The new day began in earnest.

My ex-girlfriend Susan Campbell - may she live forever and ever

I loved her; she loved me. Then we were no more together. She thought it was for the best; I thought she was right. I missed her; I hated being with her. Circumstances changed. She met someone else; we were no longer together. "We love each other. Platonically, you understand?" she wrote, "No sex, no touching. Just being together."

What do you do when the Ferris wheel stops, the roller coaster ride comes to an end? You pick yourself up and out-stare Caliban in the mirror, as self-loathing and self-pity grind you down. You pour

yourself another stiff whisky and move on. Not all women are inherently evil. My mum wasn't. Susan may have been. I missed her but it is hard to dance with the devil on your back.

Once, when I was eleven, I had a terrible fever and descended into delirium. I fought a bloody battle against hordes of ghouls and demons, clowns and fools. My mum came to me, soothed me and held me. She rubbed a herbal spirit onto my chest. I fell asleep peacefully and woke up the next morning still ill but relaxed, refreshed. When I reached thirty-five, my mum was gone. She had lost the will to live. All I had were memories and not much else.

Susan: Fire of my loins; desire of my heart. She didn't want to know me anymore. Susan: how I loved her, desired her, needed her. Sweetness in persona, she radiated pure love when she walked on by. I tried to forget her but the voice reminded me of what was and what could have been.

Susan, how much I loved her; how much I resented her. Yes, I guess. Lust brought us together and...

LOVE LUST LUCRE

I used to listen to Mendelssohn's Italian but now I listen to Beethoven's Fate.

Home V

Lancaster Canal:

An otter dips, swims and dives

Among the litter

Nausea VI

Every morning, when I awoke, I got up and visited the bathroom. I crouched down, opened my mouth and gagged. After a while, I vomited. Green and yellow bile poured out. That brief instant after the purge was pure bliss. Then reality kicked in and I felt weak, sick, alone and defeated. The nausea subsided but

the desperation and self-loathing returned me to reality and I became aware of my wretched existence. It didn't have to be this way.

My Exit

I did it all of a sudden. I felt the urge to change my circumstances. I got up, went to the kitchen and poured myself a generous glass of red wine. I had a cigarette and considered my options. They were many. Hail Shakyamuni, how many are the possibilities of leaving the wheel of suffering behind. O Lord, how many are the paths that lead to paradise. Hail Abraxas, the weight of the spiritual is so much lighter than the weight of the material. I realised I was in a position to do what I wanted and when I wanted. Good-bye all my doubts, hello self-confidence.

I had another cigarette and finished my wine. Then I went to the bathroom, listened to the spectre of my predecessor, picked up my razor, had a final shave, bent the razor back, picked out the blade, left the bathroom, walked through the living room into the bedroom, lied down on my bed, got up again, poured myself another drink, went back to the bedroom, lit another cigarette, reclined on my bed, looked at the razor, got up, put on my jacket, wrote a note, said good-bye and left the house.

My decision was final. I didn't go back.

Home VI

*At last I'm at home
Besides my open fire
With my love, my joy
We can see outside
The mountains of the Jura
Soar above the lake*

Flash Essay: Relationships - A Piece On Gender, Class And Other Things

"I saw your mother and you father walking in the park the other day". "No, it was my aunt and uncle you saw. They are not my parents. She is my father's sister and he is my father's sister's husband." "Are you sure your aunt is your mother's sister-in-law? Are you sure your uncle is your father's brother-in-law?" "Yes, I am sure. They have been married now for five years. My aunt is my mother's sister-in-law and my uncle is my father's brother-in-law." "Your uncle and your aunt, whom I both saw walking hand in hand in the park today, are both middle-class. Your parents are lower upper class." "No, my aunt, my father's sister, is lower upper-class, she is of aristocratic descent, and my uncle, my aunt's husband, was upper middle class but has now married into the lower upper class. My father, as he is my aunt's brother, was lower upper class but is now upper middle class as he is married to my mother, who was upper working class. They both love each other." "Your uncle, who was upper middle class but is now lower upper class, as he married your brother's sister, who is lower upper class, has a son and a daughter who are your cousins." "No, they are my step-cousins. They are my uncle's children but not my aunt's. They are not related to me by blood." "So, your sister is your step-sister?" "No, she is my half-sister, for she is my mother's daughter but not my father's. She is my father's step-daughter, therefore she is my half-sister."

And so on.

End

*Everyone should know
We all need decent shelter
From trolls in the head*

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ISSN 1754-7172