

Illemniscate

- I -

Ortoporos regur

-gitates its tail.

-and remains.

Infinity breaks.

An ampers

WHAT'S LEFT OF THE TAIL DRAGS OVER A
in His hands. Workable. From which
up on either side of a valley where
Blood forks around the slower crawling body.
mous scales. Till
and film over and
over the old. And
Like a series of
horizon. A bande-
agate out down
By shunting reel-
cles or Purgatory's
would not anach-
phor? From what
adisa! man draw
walks under slough, how, above him, it looks
still as slip, after all. Has all his ribs. Hasn't yet
or what an apple even is. Must first establish the
remythologized, and demythologized again. Over
record: "Him by fraud I have seduc'd from his

lava contacts. Rows of
role for a tongue gathers
through its rutted length
ins, the serpent hoards itself
terraced planes, Babel's

red clay floor that God has kneaded soft and warm
creationstuffs are formed. Earthworks are heaped
the head has plowed the clay there and there.
Two streams of blood that run past the enor-
the streams cool
new blood flows
so on and so forth.
arches above the
Waves that prop-
them like whips.
Inverted Hell cir-
epic, what history
ronize the meta-
source could par-
to express, as he
like anything less than ribbed vaulting? He is
tasted Milton's apple. Couldn't know who Milton,
myth. Then the myth must be demythologized,
and over. Eons after the event, amanuenses must
Creator...with an apple."

UR-FRUIT'S SKIN WAXENS. Its flesh grows crisp on the palate, falls apart in the mouth like wet sand. Although here, now. Here, there is no garden. Nor midst. Nor tree. However, the serpent, this serpent has unstoppered its tail from its mouth and waits, like the biblical account's snake, but not to tempt the woman whose bite, in that telling, cratered the pome. Whose spouse copied. No, no. Not that. But to take and eat the world. Of course, like many, many times before, this is just the myth demythologized then remythologized once more.

Turncheeck

IF YOU REACH THE RAILROAD TRACKS, you've gone too far. A half mile before the train's headlamp sutures the darkness behind it you'll come to a stoned-through factory burn-barrels-lit within. Ignore those fifty-five gallon drums and those who stoke the flames with crow- and rebar. Everybody else does, ignore them. Walk past and round the corner here. At the waterworks. Ignore also the stench as does, again, everybody. To a darker trailer park. Walk past this home, and these with skirting dogeared at their corners. And these with no skirting at all. Jack-standing or pedestalled on crumblesome breezeblocks, observe the false sensation of walking through a coach yard as you continue past them and this home whose screendoor bangs to, ignoring, especially, the fishnet-stockinged kinderwhore standing hipshot on its front porch and limned in a light patterned as after her hosiery, gesturing masturbatorily at her crotch and calling out: "The rod what rubs up against the fly of yourn britches dowses for this. Divine it, honey. Divine my water. Honey? *H-o-n-e-y.*" And to your receding back: "Sheeit. Probably ye wouldn't of even knowed what to do with it." Then a sound like someone sitting on a bedspring. Then a sound like that someone standing back up from the bedspring followed by a slap across their cheek. Like the slap that sent you out into an hour the full moon like a handless clockface couldn't hope to keep. "Oughtnt've turnt yours," the barkeep, refilling your glass, will say.



IN THE MORNING the preacher will bend over his pulpit, elbows spraddled like a lion

making ready to pounce. He'll address the congregation, saying: "I've knowed em what turnt coats. I've knowed brides what turnt veils at the altar. And yes, friends," he'll say metronoming his forefinger to the meter of his speech, "it wadn't but last week I broke fast with a turnfrock. Some'ye might of seent us at the Waffle House. Over coffee he wagged his finger like I'm doin now and blasphemed the good Lord up, down and sideways." Then pointing at his open bible the preacher'll ask the others to open theirs. *But whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.* "Friends," he'll then say, "let us pray." Just then the faces that'll have been looking across their shoulders at you, a visitor, will turn and bow. The preacher's head will bow. And you? Will you see them so? Or, because you'll have already buried your own hurting face into your hands, will you just have to take my word for it?

Kouros in a Cheval Mirror

OUTSIDE, RAIN FALLS over the smoldering brush pile how Emily Dickinson told all the truth. Inside my grandparents' singlewide, in the largest bedroom, my aunt rummages through her dresser. She produces various underthings from the top drawer—bras, panties, stockings, a yellow garter belt—and holds them to me.

“Take your hands away from there,” she says nodding at my crotch. I do, slowly, and straighten my arms at either side of my body, fondling the clear-white fine hairs that grow on my thighs as from the stems of tomato plants. Like the chickenwire-caged plants in the garden.

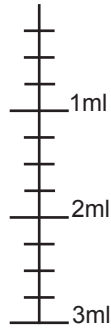
Weeding the rows earlier in the day with my grandfather, a wind came up, and we tipped the last two barrowsful of crabgrass into the fire. Sparks rose as from an anvil. He pointed at the green fruits with the hand that wasn't pinching down the brim of his strawbare hat and said: “See em crownin from them yeller flowers?”

Holding the garter belt to my underwear waistband-imprinted hips, my aunt says, “Yes.” Her reflection stands. The skin galls under my fingertips, the hairs stand. Disliking every stocking she has tried against the length of my forward leg, she returns with a pair of fishnets. When I try to pull them on their holes stretch to the size of the chickenwires'. They crumple back around my ankles no matter how hard I tug. After a while I give up. She kneels behind me and rests her chin on my left shoulder.

“Your mama cried and cried the day you was borned,” she says as she wraps her arms around my waist and hooks the garter belt at my front. She then has me rotate the belt as she slides the stockings one after the other up over my knees. She clips each stocking fast. At some point the rain that had been strafing her bedroom window eased its assault.

“Mm hm,” she says. “She liked for some blue onesie or somethin. Anything othern that little pink gown she'd brung neatly folded in her lap to the hospital. And which you come home dressed in the next day.”

Untitled



3ml SHE AWLS ANOTHER NOTCH into her belt and pulls the strap through the buckle. Instead of resting flush with the leather, the prong stands on end. The vein at her inner elbow bulges like a keloid scar. Like the scar defining her bikini line, which, shakily, she takes the span of with thumb and forefinger. With her thumb and forefinger the scar's length apart, she reaches for a primed syringe like a surgeon and picks it up from off the floor where she lies like the woman in Andrew Wyeth's "Christina's World." Then, depressing the plunger, the space between thumb- and fingertip closes.

1ml FRECKLES SPATTER HER FACE as if the blood from someone she had shot pointblank dried there. Though she's never shot anything, much less anyone,

2ml she imagines them as something she can, as her mother would say, "take a warshrag to." Because she hates them, those brownish red spots, hates her red hair, and her weight, mostly her weight. But now her jeans fall about her waist and, for the first time in her life, she wishes they'd pop their buttons.