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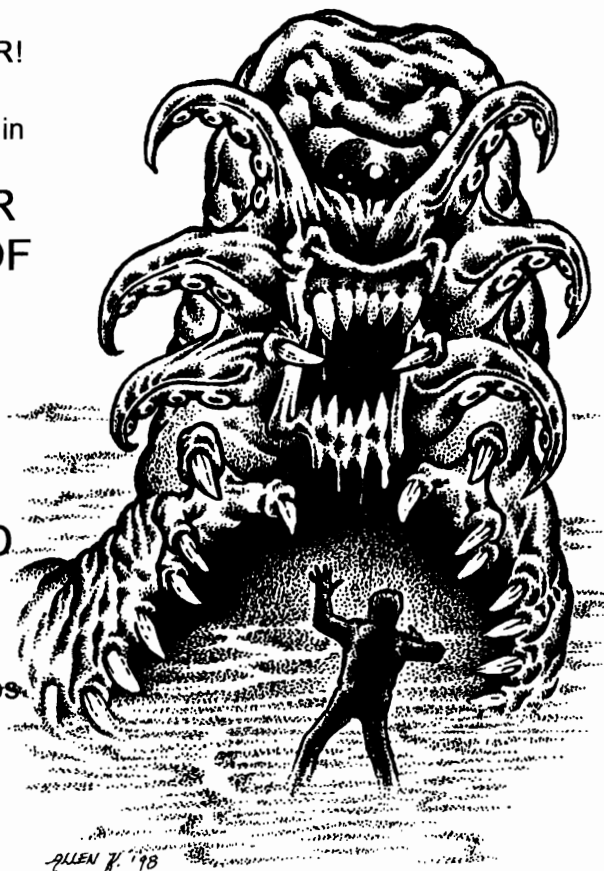


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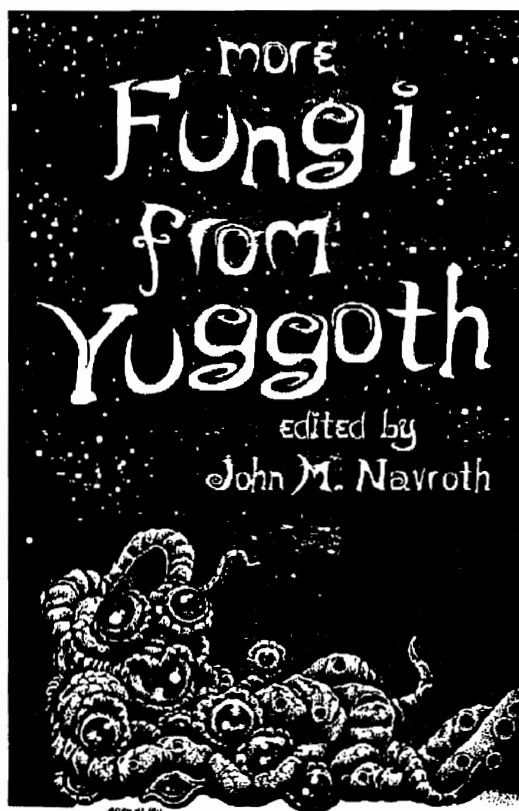
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LOVECRAFT'S WEIRD

Vol. I MYSTERIES No. 4



To those readers, writers and artists who seek and find enjoyment in the world of imagination and still believe in magic and a sense of wonder in our time of science and technology, and to the legacy of those who cast the first spells with word and vision, this magazine is respectfully dedicated.



LOVECRAFT'S WEIRD MYSTERIES
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(cover illustration by ALLEN KOSZOWSKI)



**An Interview With
MARGARET BRUNDAGE**

Along with its contents brimming with the writing of such now-famous authors as H.P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, Robert Bloch, and Ray Bradbury, no other individual characterized the "look" of the legendary pulp magazine, *Weird Tales*, better than its premier cover artist, Margaret Brundage (1900-1976). Her striking illustrations, usually depicting scantily-clad and even nude females in a variety of exotic settings were a key element in setting apart *The Unique Magazine* from hundreds of other titles on newsstands in the 1930's and, indeed, was a good reason for its success.

Now, through a special arrangement with Mr. Lars Klores, who presides over a most complete and informative *Weird Tales* website (<http://members.aol.com/weirdtales/>), Lovecraft's *Weird Mysteries* presents this rare interview with the First Lady of Illustrated Fear. The interview was conducted in Chicago on August 23, 1973 by R. Alain Everts and was first published in "Eichings & Odysseys" #2. The text is copyright © 1973, 1981 The Strange Co. for R. Alain Everts.

Everts: Please tell me something about your background.

Brundage: I was born in Chicago on 9 December, 1900 - my full name at birth was Margaret Hedda Johnson. On the one side, my mother's side, I'm Scots. On my father's side, Swedish. I went to McKinley High School, with Walt Disney. Of course, I finished; he didn't. He lied about his age to get into the Army in World War I. But we both went to art school together, to the Chicago Academy of Fine Art. I was there, I think, about 1921-1922-1923 or so, along there somewhere. I was considered one of their better students. I don't think I ever got their certificate of graduation, because I could never letter. Never! My lettering is the world's worst.

Everts: Was this a four-year course?

Brundage: No, it was a two-year course. After I finished the Academy, I was doing freelance - fashion designs for various newspapers. I was married in 1927 to Slim Brundage, and had one son, born shortly thereafter [Kerlyn Byrd Brundage (1927-1972)].

Everts: You brought in some fashion designs for *Weird Tales*?

Brundage: No, I was trying to break away from fashion. I was trying to get out of the black & white, and if possible, into color. I looked up *Weird Tales* - one of the many magazines published here in Chicago with editorial offices also here in Chicago - so I looked up *Weird Tales*. It was the one I hit on. I didn't know that they published *Oriental Tales*, but I just happened to have a drawing of an Oriental dancer in my samples, and they must have talked it over and decided to give me a job, even though they knew I knew nothing about color reproduction.

Everts: The illustration that you brought in, of the Oriental dancer, was that used as a cover illustration?

Brundage: No, it was the wrong size. It just simply gave the idea that if I could draw an Oriental dancer, I could do *Oriental Tales* covers. Then they changed the name of

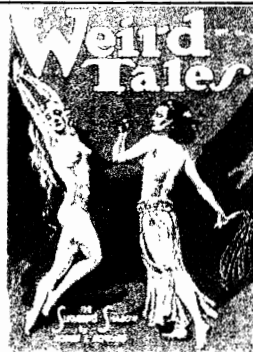
Oriental Tales to *Magic Carpet*. In fact, not so long after I started work with them.

Everts: So you did covers first for *Oriental Tales*?

Brundage: Yes, for *Oriental Tales*, and then for *Weird Tales*. *Weird Tales* continued throughout. Until, I think, about two years before I stopped working for them I got just about every other cover of *Weird Tales* to illustrate. Later, Virgil Finlay got the other ones. It was partly my fault - you know, you get something and take it for granted. And you're not quite as careful as you

might be. And I did not know that I had a competitor in the offing. And they asked me, I remember, on one occasion to make the cover extra nice. Well, it just so happened that another artist had told me that they had a different type of paper from the one I was using [which] would be better for the cover.





So I went into the new paper. And it wasn't a success. After that mistake, Virgil Finlay got many of the covers. Finlay was absolutely wonderful in black-and-white, but in color, he wasn't so hot. But he was Mrs. [Farnsworth] Wright's nephew, or some close relative.

Everts: You must recall Farnsworth Wright quite well from this period.

Brundage: Oh yes! Well, he was a perfectly wonderful man. Even at this period, he was very far gone with his disease – Parkinson's Disease. He was a very tall man, six feet, three or four inches, with a boyish face.

Everts: How bad was his Parkinson's Disease?

Brundage: Well, he had this stumbling gait, and an extremely bad palsy. Of course, I did not know then, but one day he told me he had acquired it like sleeping sickness from the bite of a Tsetse fly. He had a wonderful sense of humor – I saw him about once a month for many years, so came to know him well. He was very much attached to his wife and his little boy.

Everts: What about Bill Sprenger?

Brundage: He was short, and dark and very kind. They both knew that when *Weird Tales* was going to move to New York, that I would be left in a financial bind, since my husband and I were separated, and they knew he was worthless, at least for financial support - and here I was with a kid to raise. Sprenger kept in touch with me for about five years after *Weird Tales* moved to New York, and showed a great deal of concern about my situation.

Everts: What was Farnsworth Wright like as a person?

Brundage: He had a rather keen sense of humor. Well, I don't know whether you'd care to publish this, since Mrs. Wright probably wouldn't like it, but he liked risqué, even dirty stories. He saved them up for me, and I saved them up, any I'd heard, for him. I think she [Mrs. Wright] was a pretty prim woman - I don't know, I never met her. I only gathered that.

Everts: I think that I'd heard that Farnsworth Wright enjoyed a risqué story at times.

Brundage: At times? Any time!

Everts: What about Sprenger? Was he the opposite?

Brundage: No, Mr. Sprenger used to conduct the business. And frequently he would be in the room – see, they had two rooms, the business room and the editorial room - and he would frequently stick around the editorial room. But I can never recall Sprenger recounting a risqué story. He would laugh. He was perfectly wonderful to Mr. Wright. He had a car and used to pick him up and drive him home. At least, toward the end. I knew Farnsworth for a period of five years.

Everts: Do you recall the most controversial *Weird Tales* cover?

Brundage: We had one issue [the September, 1933 issue] that sold out! It was the story of a very vicious female, getting a-hold of the heroine and tying her up and beating her. Well, the public apparently thought it was flagellation and the entire issue sold out. They could have used a couple of thousand extra.

Everts: Did you choose that scene to illustrate?

Brundage: You see, I would submit about three different pencil sketches. And they would make the selection of the one I was to do in color. Once in a while I would suggest a little color in my sketches, but most of the time [pause] well, they were very rough. And yes, they



chose the scene. I didn't. Having read the story, the thought of flagellation never entered my head. I don't think it had theirs either. But it turned out that way.

Everts: What models did you use for these nudes - your imagination?

Brundage: Mostly my imagination, yep. Once in a while, I would get - have a friend pose for me. But... mostly it was out of my head. And, for the male figures, I would pick my husband to pose for a while. But to hire models, no, I'm afraid I didn't. But I did give them the impression that I did hire models. But I never came right out and said, "I hired a model." But if they thought I had a live model, it would cause me less trouble with anatomical problems. Now, I knew anatomy -- I don't know whether I know it that well now -- but I taught it for a couple of years, so that I really knew my anatomy. Like all inexperienced people with art, they would find a flaw that really isn't a flaw -- you know what I mean? -- something about the picture that bothered them. And they'll pick out something -- and probably the thing they pick out is perfect, but something else is really wrong. And they make you correct the one thing, and it worsens the picture really. The artist could have told them what was wrong. Well, this happens all the time in commercial art. The person buying will find something wrong with it nine times out of ten. But that's not really what's wrong.

Everts: What size color illustration did they want?

Brundage: I usually gave it to them twice the size of the cover. Sometimes, and it depended on the cover, it would be more -- two and a half, three times the cover. There was always a reduction. And the rate of pay was always \$90 per cover.

Everts: How long did it take you to draw each cover?

Brundage: It would be impossible to give general estimates, because some took much longer than others. A single figure, oh, I guess I could knock out in a week, if I kept right at it. But you understand that while I was doing this, I was keeping house, raising a son, taking care of a crippled mother. So that I could never sit down and draw for a week. In other words, it was come and go with it.

Everts: What inspiration did you use for the exotic covers, the clothing, the monsters?

Brundage: In almost every instance, just off the top of my head.

Everts: What are the advantages and disadvantages of working in pastels as you exclusively did?

Brundage: For one thing, I didn't know beans about oils. And I was good in pastels. Watercolors, well, even pastels, you cannot make corrections. Oil is the best of all mediums for making corrections. You can go over and over and so on. But I liked the soft medium. I've always liked it. But they smudge terribly. Like for *Weird Tales*, I had a little box-like affair made for them with cardboard backing, for taking them to the offices. I used a sandy paper for drawing on. I never worked with the engravers - never even saw them.

Everts: Did *Weird Tales* ever tell you to touch over your nudes or any of the covers at all?

Brundage: Oh yes, I made corrections. Quite a few - usually it would be on the hands or the feet. Now, I'm good on feet, but I wasn't good on hands. I'm still not good on hands. Once in a while, they would want something brought out a little more distinctly. But nine times out of ten, they accepted the cover just as it was.

Everts: Were you ever asked to start covering your nudes a bit?

Brundage: I was never asked to, no. One funny thing did happen. One of the authors -- well, Weird Tales asked me to make larger and larger breasts -- larger than I would have liked to -- well, one cover, one of the authors wrote in and said that things were getting a little bit out of line. And even for an old expert like him, the size of the breastwork was getting a little too large.

Everts: What happened when Weird Tales moved to New York?

Brundage: I lost the contract. You see, Mr. Wright no longer had complete say over Weird Tales. It was bought by a syndicate. And they had a good deal to say about it. And also there was a time limit there. Now, you see, they would send me the story. I would have to read it, get the rough sketches done, and get them back to them, and they would make their selection. Then, I would have to make the drawing. In the first place, pastels don't ship well. In other words, I would have to go into another medium. And, we tried it with one month, with a pastel that got pretty well-battered up in transit. And it had to be shipped back to me for corrections. And, well it got back to them messed up again. And by that time, the engraver was going crazy since he had a time limit as well -- see, we only worked two months in advance. In other words, from the time I drew the cover to the time it hit the stands was two months. And that was not much time. After Mr. Wright died, the new editor contacted me and I did one cover in oil -- but it wasn't as good as my best. Well, I guess they didn't like it very well. They paid me for it, but I never heard from them.

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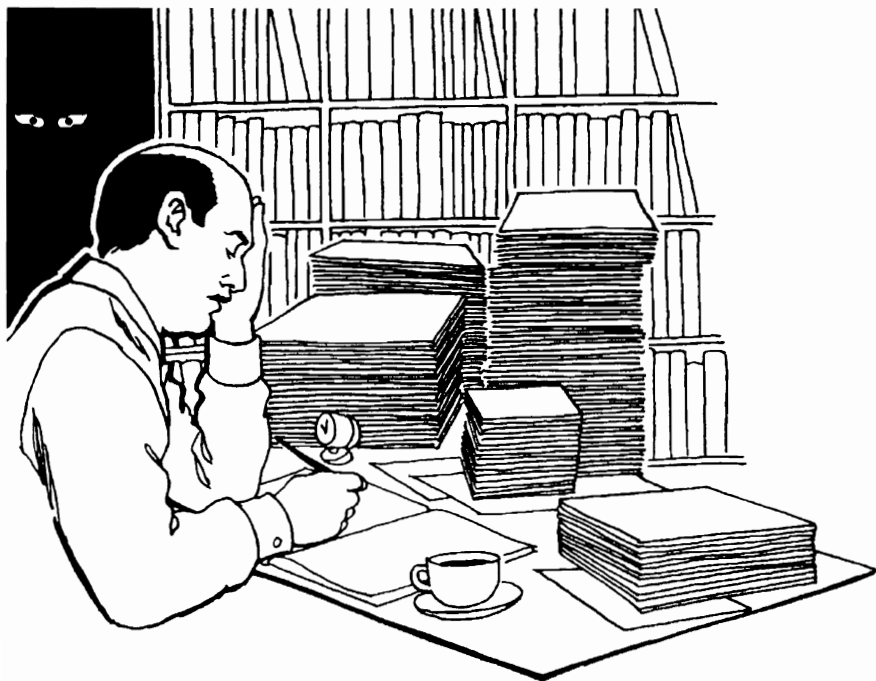
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The Hounded

by
Lee Clark Zumpe

Reggie's eyes plundered the shadows nervously. The thing lurked in those murky depths, mocking him. Every so often he could hear the hiss of its breath, see light reflected off its hideous eyes. Sometimes it would taunt him, rattle the furniture or rap on the

walls. Its infernal tittering made him cringe.

He cupped his face in his hands. Midnight had come and gone and still he sat at his desk deep in the heart of a sprawling office complex, unable to do what must be done. He cursed himself for his indecision as tears seeped

through his fingers and dotted the papers spread across his desk.

* * *

Reginald Pennington always had good intentions. His staff knew that well enough. Certainly Kilian, his primary assistant and close friend, knew that. Sadly, though, Reggie--as his loyal employees called him--had turned out to be an ineffectual manager. He had earned his position, and in doing so he had earned the allegiance of those who worked for him; but it became clear within weeks of his promotion that he simply could not produce the results the company desired.

Fortunately for Reggie, the company shied away from terminating individuals in middle management. Upper management apparently loathed admitting to lapses in their otherwise flawless judgment. Instead, they allowed the substandard supervision problem to persist until an agreeable resolution could be found. Sometimes, the targeted manager was offered a respectable buy-out; other times, responsibilities would be stripped away gradually or a new management position would be created to oversee the problemed associate. Occasionally, in dire situations, a mediocre manager might be promoted to a much higher position in a remote location, forcing an imminent departure from the company.

None of these things happened in Reggie's circumstance. Weeks mushroomed into months (as weeks will do), and months grew into a year. It seemed that upper management had forgotten about Reggie's ineptitude, or had chosen to ignore the plight indefinitely.

Kilian watched from his office, watched as the department's productivity fell to an all-time low. He watched Reggie struggling with his duties, watched as morale began to crumble.

He felt a great deal of compassion for Reginald Pennington. After all, the two had signed on with the company about the same time, and they had worked their way up the corporate ladder side by side. Reggie might have failed as a manager, but no one could deny the fact that he had sacrificed everything he had -- every ounce of blood and every drop of sweat -- to his career.

It impressed Kilian that no matter how bleak the outlook, Reggie always maintained an appearance of accomplishment. He never came into the office in the morning without a smile. He conversed with his employees on a friendly level. He did his best to make everyone comfortable, and to make the company a compelling place to work. It struck Kilian that his boss was either exceptionally proficient at concealing his disappointment over his failure, or he was blissfully ignorant of his inadequacy.

One morning, however, all that changed. About a year after receiving his promotion, Reggie walked into the office on a Monday morning. For the first time in his years at the company, he arrived an hour late. He said nothing to his secretary as he marched hastily through the office. Kilian lifted his head from the reports scattered over the table in front of him to greet his boss, but Reggie completely ignored him.

Reggie stormed into his office and slammed the door. Kilian glanced at the secretary across the room and raised an eyebrow. The secretary simply shrugged

his shoulders and resumed his work. Kilian waited a few minutes, then stood and walked over to Reggie's office.

Kilian rapped gently on the door, then opened it and stuck his head in the room before Reggie could answer.

"Everything o.k. this morning, Reggie?"

"Yes," Reggie growled, swinging around in his chair. "No, I," he stuttered. His face was pale, his hair uncombed. It appeared that he had forgotten to shave. "The Jamison account--do you have the paperwork on that?"

"No," Kilian said, entering the room. "I think that it's in your in-basket." Kilian hiked over to his boss's desk and began to shuffle through a stack of papers. He fixed briefly on a picture of Linda, Reggie's estranged wife. Reggie had been fairly quiet about the separation, and Kilian did not feel it was appropriate to inquire. "I'm pretty sure that Denise returned it..."

"Never mind," Reggie said abruptly, waving an arm as if to dispel his assistant. "Just have Roger print me another hardcopy."

"Sure, no problem." Kilian began to ask if Reggie was coming down with something when he noticed that the man's eyes were streaked with red. As he watched, Reggie's gaze shot from one corner of the room to the other, his head twitching nervously. His mouth hung slack and a look of complete bewilderment perverted his expression. "Reggie," he finally said after a long pause, "If you aren't feeling well, maybe you should go home. I can handle things here..."

"Kilian," Reggie said, his eyes still darting around the room, "You don't...I mean, you can't

see..." he stammered, his voice shaking.

"No," he said softly, then stood without completing the former question. "Never mind," he barked, "Just get me that hardcopy."

"Yes sir."

Reggie did leave the office early that afternoon, and he did not return for two days. Kilian generously stepped in and covered for his absent superior, completing assignments and offering adequate explanations for Mr. Pennington's truancy. He made sure that the department ran as smoothly as possible.

In fact, for those two days Reggie stayed home, productivity actually increased. By Thursday, Reggie made an appearance. He sneaked into the building through the maintenance operators' entrance sometime before 5:00 am, crept up the back stairs and skulked down a series of darkened hallways until he reached his department. He had not expected to find anyone in at such an early hour, but as he approached he could hear music playing faintly.

Kilian practically jumped out of his chair when Reggie walked up.

"Christ, you scared the hell out of me," Kilian said, smiling. Then he looked up at Reggie, and every hint of that smile withdrew from his face. Reggie's ashen face twisted with fear, his eyes burned with desperation. His fingers fidgeted as his hands shook wildly. His mouth hung wide, and his breath came in unnatural pants and gasps and wheezes.

"Oh my God," Kilian mumbled, then rushed around his desk to clasp Reggie's arm and guide him into his office.

"Kilian," Reggie said as he was being lead to his desk, "Is everything all right here? Things -- you know, business -- is it good?"

"Yeah, Reggie, everything's fine."

"Good...good." Reggie's head jerked to one side as he sat in his chair. His eyes narrowed and he frowned, he leaned forward as if he was trying to find something on the floor. "Damn thing..."

"What's wrong?"

"Nothing...got the flu, I think," Reggie said. "Probably still running a fever."

"You shouldn't be here in that case." Kilian walked across the room and began to make some coffee. Standing with his back to Reggie, he watched his boss's reflection in a wall mirror that ran from floor to ceiling. Reggie's gaze locked on something and followed it around the room, across the floor and up the wall. "Why don't you go home?"

"NO!" Reggie shouted. "I can't go back there. Too many shadows."

"Huh?"

"It likes shadows. It hides in them, this thing." Reggie gasped, suddenly realizing what he was saying, to whom he was speaking. He lowered his head grimly, and tears welled up in his eyes.

"Something's following me, Kilian. Something evil, it's following me everywhere. Trying to drive me insane."

"What are you talking about, Reggie?"

"It's small, and it's ugly...I mean, I haven't seen anything more than it's outline, but I know it's got to be repulsive. A demon or something."

Reggie shuddered as the tears began to flow. Kilian walked over and put a hand on his shoulder, knelt down beside him.

"Why is it doing this to me? Why?"

"Reggie...you need to see someone, get some help."

"You think I'm crazy." Reggie looked up at Kilian, shaking his head. "You think I'm insane, but I'm not. I'm not. It's here, in this room." Just then, his eyes grew wide and his head turned to the side. "*There!* Can't you see it? Can't you?"

Kilian followed Reggie's gaze to the wall.

"I'm sorry, Reggie..." Kilian said.

Reggie doubled-up in the chair then, sobbing hysterically. "I can't go home, Reggie. I can't."

"It's OK, Reggie," Kilian said. He walked to the door and made certain that it was locked before he left. "Just stay in here today, and I won't tell anyone where you are. I'll be at my desk. If you need anything, call my extension. Okay?"

"Yes..." Reggie mumbled. "Thank you, Kilian. You've always been my friend."

Twenty hours later, Kilian sat in a dark office staring at Reggie's door. Not once during the day did his boss call him. He never came out, and no one else in the department knew he sat cowering behind his desk. The last few stragglers had gone home more than an hour ago, and the cleaning crew would not make it up to this floor until three am.

Kilian stood, shakily, fatigue slowly beginning to show. He had been awake for about twenty-four hours now. No amount of coffee and candy bars could revitalize him at this point.

He fit the key in the lock quietly. He paused, not certain

what he should expect when the door opened.

"Reggie?" he called out as he walked into the room. There was no response. Every light in the office was burning bright. Not a shadow pooled in any corner.

Kilian walked in and found his boss slumped over his desk, completely motionless. His hands were blue and cold. A faint odor of decay filled the room.

"Christ," Kilian said as he leaned against the desk. At first, he could not tell if it had been a heart attack or a stroke that claimed his long-time friend. Then he saw the empty pill bottle that had rolled onto the floor. "Poor Reggie."

Kilian gazed down at Linda's picture. She was an attractive woman in her late twenties, red hair--clearly only a few generations removed from Irish ancestry. The threat of losing a woman like that could certainly drive a man over the edge. Now that Reggie had checked out, of course, Linda would have to get on with her life. She might need some help getting through this difficult period of mourning, Kilian thought.

"I'll have to look you up at the memorial service, my dear," he said absently as he stood. As he crossed the room, something caught his eye. Something small -- no larger than a domestic cat-- burst into the light for a moment, scurried across the floor and burrowed under the desk.

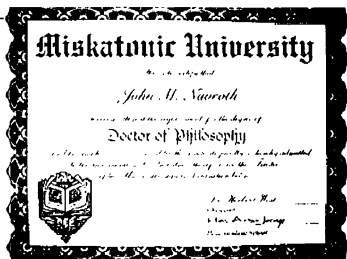
Hideous, aberrant laughter filled the room.

Kilian dropped to his knees and stared beneath the desk. He saw it: A hairless, brown-skinned troll-like creature with drool-moist lips and saucer-sized eyes full of fiery crimson brilliance. It squatted there, that grotesque little beast, giggling horribly and glaring at Kilian.

"Salutations," it said, spraying spittle across its lips.

"Hello Max." Kilian answered. "I wondered where you had gotten off to."

"I'll have to look you up at the memorial service, *my dear*" the thing said sarcastically. "And I thought all this time you just wanted his job!" ☼



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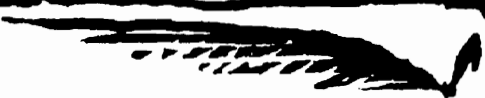
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A Search For The Source Of The Miskatonic

(From the papers of the late
Professor John W. Allan III)

by
Jody Forest

Excerpts from Cabot's Journal, 1635

April 16

We've built three large rafts here where the Dunwich and Miskatonic Rivers converge and hope to pole upriver. Our Indian guides, however, refused to go further and have absconded during the night with their canoes and much of our supplies. Luckily, our provisions of black powder were left untouched, it being Mr. Jeffries' belief that the heathens were ignorant as to its use. We hope to blast away any large rocks or other obstacles which may hinder our progress upriver.

April 18

The river has grown increasingly brackish; most of the men have become wan and pale and two are very ill, one of them near death. I've given orders to take our drinking water only from the smaller tributary streams feeding into the river and not from the main river itself. Mr. Jeffries maintains that the contamination is as a result of rotting vegetable matter, with a surprisingly large proportion of fungoid material and mushroom remains perceived amongst the fetid algae. I concur. The surrounding flora is becoming increasingly decadent; even the stunted, misshapen trees have a soft, pulpy feel to them, and snakes and frogs far outnumber other fauna.

April 20

Three more men are extremely ill and two have died. We buried them on shore in earth swarming with earthworms, maggots, and other loathsome insects of a type I've never before encountered. A nasty bit of business. No fresh game has been sighted for a week, now, and the men have all been forced

to half-rations. We've tried catching fish but all we've caught thus far are an unknown variety, very cold and slimy with large, bulbous eyes and teeth like the pirhanas reported from Brasilia. Not good to eat at all but made more palatable by the addition of freshly-gathered mushrooms, various dug-up tubers, and brandy. Land grows increasingly desolate; gray, stunted trees and the nightly howling of marauding wolves.

April 25

Two more men have expired. The rest remain wan and pale. I have considered turning back but the river continues to narrow with each passing day. We supplement our diet with large bats which fly upriver near dawn. Blood red they are, with *no eyes!* Vicious vermin, but acceptable dining with the requisite mushrooms and brandy.

April 27

The remaining men are all reporting strange dreams. Thank God! I thought it was I, alone. Vast chasms about me spinning 'round, no sense of direction; a *droning* sound as of angry hornets and a *chanting* of nonsensical Latin, "*Vae! Vae! Malefici Yog Sothoth Hypnos Damnatus Ryleh Monstrum!*" over and over. I have given orders to discontinue consumption of the mushrooms and tubers as Mr. Jeffries informs me that certain types can cause hallucinations and distortion of the senses. Some of the men's persistent hunger, I fear, leads them to disobey me.

April 29

There looms before us a large mountain possibly a day's journey ahead. We have spied what appear to be campfires lit upon it at night. Mr. Jeffries informs me that it must be the tribe only rumored of, devil-worshippers and cannibals, 'tis said, though he for one has doubted their existence. We have no choice, now, but to continue on. Only a few of us have strength to pole through the thick waters of the river. I even hear the stolid, dependable Jeffries shouting "*Yog Sothoth!*" in his nightly delirium, waking each morning with reddened, fearful eyes, refusing to recount his dreams to me, only saying they were "horrible" and best forgotten.

April 30

The river has narrowed to less than twenty feet across and we have reached the base of the mountain. The Mis-Qa-Toniq (as the Indians named it) flows out of a large fissure at the mountain's foot and it is apparent that the source of the river is in an underground cavern at its heart. We make camp here and rest.

(Editor's Note: The foregoing excerpts from Cabot's Journal were discovered amongst the remains of his campsite at the base of the aforementioned mountain, since named Mt. Cabot, altitude 820 feet. He and his party were apparently attacked and killed by the unknown tribe of Indians. However, in an ironic twist of fate, Cabot and his men brought with them cholera, which in turn drove the tribe to extinction.)

Excerpts from the Diary of French Trapper Jacques Martin. 1697

Sept. 15 (Eight weeks south of Nova Scotia)

Found the remains of nearly two hundred Indians scattered nearby. Plague victims apparently, though Cabot's party's remains all bore signs of violence (skulls caved in, arrowheads and spear points lodged in bone) and possible cannibalism. Most of his supplies were still stacked neatly in a nearby cave. None the worse for wear, though moldy and foodstuffs spoiled. A large supply of black powder was discovered in casks sealed with wax.

Sept. 16

Read Cabot's Journal and immediately ordered my five trapping companions to cease drinking the Miskantonic river water, which indeed, we have all noticed tasting foul and brackish. Luckily, we have with us a large store of food and kegged water for we have traveled overland from the

north and had little experience with such foulness until we approached this location. I speculate that the many tributaries that feed the Miskatonic eventually dilute its putrid waters by the time it reaches the sea.

Sept. 18

My men are anxious to depart for there are no beavers here to trap or game of any sort. Our water supply grows short, but I convince them to tarry, for there is something eerie about that cavern from whence the Miskatonic flows and I wish to explore it further. Last night, answering Nature's Call, I wandered away from the campsite and noticed a pale, greenish luminescence issuing from within the depths of the cavern whence flows the river. It is gold, I am sure, but durst not inform the men lest word of my find makes its way to the English, who claim this land for their King.

Sept. 20

I have informed the men that I intend to remain here alone and attempt to trap and hunt the surrounding countryside. They argue, pointing out the barren, miasmal swamps and sickly shrubs for leagues around which would surely bear no fruit of labor. But, I remain firm in my resolve and they begrudgingly prepare their departure on the morrow. My plan is to place a large quantity of Cabot's black powder into the mouth of the cavern and ignite it, thereby exposing the vein of gold within its bowels. My diary I shall seal, with orders for it to be delivered to my brother, Wm., back in Frency territory, where, God willing, I shall return shortly a wealthy man. Adieu.

Report of the Royal Geographical Society Mapping Expedition to America
(Excerpt: Unusual Phenomena of the American Continent)

Sept. 22, 1697

A approx. 9 p.m., on this date, under a full moon, a tremendous roar was heard to the northwest, followed by an earthquake. In the distance, at an area reckoned as . . . (*Apparently the site of the trapper Martin's last entry-Ed.*), a sheet of greenish flame shot out of a mountain top for leagues into the sky, an anomaly lasting nearly twenty minutes. No smoke was seen but the green flame writhed in the air as though it t'were the monstrous tentacle of a sea creature. Many of the Indians and slaves in our party were convinced the Day of Judgement was at hand.

The most curious aspect of the phenomena, however, was a screaming, wailing, ululation that resembled no earthly one, so loud and fearsome that men were forced to clasp their hands over their ears. Could this be an event of the "Barsifal Guns" hitherto unknown in this part of the world, yet ofttimes reported off the coasts of India? A three-man search party was dispatched to investigate.

Sixty days later they have still not been heard from and are given up for lost.

Sworn Statement of Wilum Martin

Nov. 3, 1710

My brother, Jacques Martin, disappeared in the Northeastern English territories some thirteen years ago. It was many years before I read his diary and found he'd left his trapping companions after apparently catching "gold fever", the "English disease". I was sure that after such a long time he was surely dead, but was determined to search for his remains in order to put our poor mother's mind to rest. I assumed the quickest course would be to simply travel up the Miskatonic until I came to its end (or more properly, its beginning). So, with two black slaves and two Indians to guide me we canoed upriver into the heart of that barren, godless waste, careful to boil our drinking water along the way. Approx. three days from what I



estimated to be our final destination, our Indian guides suddenly refused to venture further. Moreover, neither threats of punishment nor promises of reward could induce a change in their fearful minds. "Place where the Dark One dreams", "Yog-Sothoth", and "Very bad!" was all their fractured, pidgin English could tell me.

For the next few days until we reached our destination, we were plagued by the most peculiar nightmares. Vast chasms splitting apart like kaleidoscopes revealing other chasms and abysses within, and all about sounds of chanting, "*Vae! Vae! Yog-Sothoth Hypno Damnatus!*" in hysterical, pain-ridden voices, accompanied by shrill, discordant flutes and a monotonous, soporific drumming, drawing us nearer and further down the abyss until we awoke before dawn each day, terrified and wide-eyed. These strange visions intensified each night as we drew closer to our goal. My two slaves were terrified and I tried to put on a careless air. But, my own anxiety grew fearfully evident and I doubt if it was successful in its intent.

Finally, about noon we reached my brother's campsite where I found his rusted rifle and few, meager belongings. The whole area was littered by the remains of a terrific explosion and its focal point was obviously the cavern from whence the Miskatonic issued, now little more than a stream a scant few feet across and only inches deep. We spent the rest of that first day futilely looking for evidence of my brother's remains amongst the surrounding countryside, a plethora of mushrooms, fungi, moss and stunted trees as far as the eye could see.

That night my strange dreams returned and their awful vividness woke me and I resolved to rise in hope to walk off my feelings of dread. My two slaves had refused to sleep at all and were huddled by the campfire, shivering and staring around them with wide, fearful eyes. I wandered in the direction of the cavern and was somewhat surprised to find flecks of a shining, greenish phosphorescence scattered on the walls throughout its entrance, growing in profusion and intensity towards the rear of the cavern. Gold? Perhaps my brother was right! I hurriedly gathered up some provisions, fashioned a few torches, and dragged my reluctant slaves into the yawning chasm with me, though they begged to wait for daylight. I sternly pointed out that no sun would pierce that stygian darkness and they fearfully followed me in, praying and crossing themselves all the while.

We waded slightly downwards for perhaps fifty yards, occasionally squeezing past large boulders, piles of rubble, and the shattered remains of many black powder casks. The strange, greenish-gold phosphorescence grew in brilliance and radiance until our torches were scarcely needed. The slaves grew more fearful as they excitedly pointed out the fact that the small source of the Miskatonic was now *flowing uphill!* I was stunned and groped the cavern-stream's floor to verify this and found that it was true; the water was now of a consistency near that of mercury, cold and slimy, repulsive to the touch, increasingly so as we progressed. I pointed out to the awe-struck slaves that Africa's Nile River flows northwards for many hundreds of miles and that this was merely a variation of that peculiarity. I did not believe this myself, however, and am at a loss to account for it.

Somewhat later, as we continued on our downhill journey through the cavern, a humming, buzzing sound was heard to the rear of our party which quickly became a tremendous roar and we flung ourselves to the ground in the midst of the slimy Miskatonic rivulet as an immense, winged army of bats came screaming and chittering mere inches over our heads and for near twenty full minutes we lay trapped and freezing as they flew in a rush over our backs and deeper into the cavern. My slaves were now petrified with fright and though I pushed and shoved them forward they prayed and gibbered tearfully the entire way.

The fissure the bats had erupted from so rapidly soon resolved itself to be a gigantic, carven stairway, cyclopean in nature, stretching downwards as

far as the eye could see, with steps each nearly four feet tall. I stood aghast, its antiquity self-evident. Words sprang to mind: primordial, chthonic, antediluvian...just to touch its fleshy, repulsive surface made my skin crawl. We however began the descent; it was slow going, the now slimy Miskatonic covered the steps, at times flowing slowly, *perpendicularly* up the steps at an amazing ninety degree angle! The green phosphorescence shone brightly on the cave walls, highlighting intricate bas-reliefs engraven in unknown glyphs, resembling no others I'd ever encountered anywhere before.

We spent the better part of a day, by my estimate, climbing laboriously down that immense staircase. It widened gradually until it stretched nearly one hundred yards across and only the bas-reliefs glimmering faintly on the walls served to break the monotony of our macabre journey. I began to fear having to return to the surface for supplies when finally we came to the shore of a large underground lake whose dark, oily waters lapped at our feet. The greenish glow still shone wan and sickly on the scene and we doused finally our torches and gazed at a small island in the center of the lake from which we could hear the hoarse croaking of a multitude of frogs amidst the occasional chirping and rustling of the bat-army nesting on the roof of that inland sea-cavern. A group of moldy, cobwebbed Indian dug-outs lay on the shore and I proceeded to select the sturdiest-looking one. My two companions and I then set off for the island, in the midst of which we could make out a squat building made of dark obsidian-like stone.

We reached the island, pulled the canoe ashore, secured the paddles, and found ourselves walking amidst a tiny forest of grotesque, misshapen mushrooms, the ground under our feet having a soft, fleshy, snake-like feel to it. Perhaps it was the dank, spore-filled air, but I began to perceive the far-off cavern walls move ever so faintly and regularly and the only thing I can relate it to was as if we were in the lungs of an immense, breathing *thing*. Indeed, many times I had to rub my eyes and look away as the impression was so strong and unnerving.

Next came a bizarre occurrence which happened in the space of but a few short seconds but which has haunted me to this day. We had reached the squat, stone building and were searching for an entrance of some kind when a naked wild man, covered with long, matted white hair and whose eyes were large and pink suddenly appeared from a small alcove in the temple/tomb and grabbed the slave in the lead, plunged a stone dagger into his throat, and, as the wide-eyed slave's body fell to the ground the wild man plunged his long, sharp-taloned fingers into the man's chest, pulled out his still-beating heart and began to scream shrilly: "*Yog-Sothoth Vae! Hypno Damnatus Ry'leh Monstro!*"

He raised the blood-soaked heart above his head, waved it towards the roof of the cavern, then brought the bloody organ downwards to his mouth, where he tore off a large chunk of it with sharp-filed teeth and began to *chew*. The whole incident, as I said, took place in only a few seconds and though I stood petrified and in shock the whole time and could hear the other slave behind me screaming in fright, my mind must have somehow continued to function for I seemed to awaken and found myself pointing my musket at the abomination before me. Without thinking, I fired and three things happened at once: The great sound of the explosion from my musket echoed and reverberated deafeningly, magnified throughout that vast, silent cavern; the wild man fell to the ground, shot through the forehead; and the bats, now aroused from their perches, blocked out the light as a seeming million of them, twittering noisily, now, began streaming furiously out of the cavern once again. My remaining companion and I fell to the earth, which we quickly discovered to our distaste, was littered with bat guano and mites. We remained there for a full half hour, in the darkness, until finally the devilish horde had disappeared, save for a few stragglers who soon returned to their perches on the roof of the cavern once more.

We hurriedly washed up as best we could in the slimy lake, and though I knew we shouldn't, drank heavily of its waters, for the guano had left our lungs filled with ammonia. We then returned to examine the corpse of our assailant.

He was a white man, though this fact was not apparent at first, for he was caked with filth and open, pustulent sores. He was nude, with long white hair and a beard, both encrusted with dirt. His eyes were abnormally enlarged and pink, probably from living an underground existence, I thought, and his teeth had all been filed to a point. I shuddered to think of what lowly subterranean denizens he'd been feasting upon for unholy sustenance. We turned his body over and I stifled a moan as I spied a tattoo of the flag of France on his left shoulder and knew with in a finality of horror that the wild man I had killed was the living, breathing body of none other than my own dear brother, Jacques!

We then ate the last of our biscuits and jerky, washing it down with more of the slimy lake water and though the remaining slave desired fervently to leave at once I insisted we give my brother a Christian burial. By now, however, we were both too exhausted to accomplish the task and we looked about for somewhere to rest for a few hours. This we did inside the stone building (which I continued to think of as a tomb, for no apparent reason). There was yet another large stairway inside the tomb, though smaller than the one leading from the outside, which led downwards for many yards before disappearing into the gloom. But, by unspoken agreement, neither of us ventured down it, a palpable feeling of great dread having seized us both and we sank exhausted to the floor.

We slept, and God grant that we had not! The vast chasms and grand cyclopean abysses I had dreamt of before revealed themselves to be merely motes in far larger chasms and abysses without end in which I seemed to fall forever down strange prisms and angles while a droning, chanting sound reverberated mockingly: "*Vae! Vae! Malefici Yog-Sothoth! Hypnos Damnatus Ry'leh Monstro!*"

In these dreams misshapen bats sucked hungrily at my throat and a vision came to me in which it seemed only fitting that I should kill my companion for the glory of Yog-Sothoth. I vaguely recall that in my dream it seemed I dragged him screaming to the middle of the tomb on which there was a man-sized slab of granite and, using my late brother's crude stone knife, I plunged it into his screaming, struggling body again and again. Then I ripped apart his tendons and sinews, pried open his rib cage and there it was! Yes! I pulled out his heart with my hands and lifted it high above my head, screaming out in holy gratitude with tears running down my cheeks: "*Vae! Malefici Yog-Sothoth! Hypnos Damnatus Ry'leh! Vae! Vae!*"

Here the dream merged with scenes of myself rowing back across that haunted lake, weeping, laughing, pulling myself endlessly up that flight of cyclopean stairs, fighting through hordes of twittering bats and running fitfully, gibbering downstream along the banks of the accursed Miskatonic to the point where I was found wandering and half-naked, finally being placed here in the King's Prison in Arkham.

End of Wilum Martin's Statement

IV.) Findings of Mass. Bay Colony Tribunal

May 15, 1711

The French Trapper Wilum Martin was found in a half-wild state on the banks of the upper Miskatonic along with partially-eaten body parts of a black man in a bag of possessions around his neck. He was placed in jail, suspected of murder and cannibalism, and when well enough to have

appeared to regain his senses, wrote out to us the foregoing statement. It was pointed out to him that his obvious ploy at a defense of insanity should be dropped to spare the feelings of his family a trial. Accordingly, a length of rope was left in his cell and his later death ruled a suicide, the matter dropped, and the case against him was subsequently considered closed.

V.) Excerpt from Cotton Mather's letter to the Governor General stating his reasons for the abandonment of settling colonies along the Miskatonic River Valley, 1720

An *Army of Devils* is horribly broke in upon our English settlements there and the houses of good people there are filled with the doleful shrieks of their children and servants, tormented by invisible hands, with tortures altogether preternatural. Great and blazing wonders in the sky, divine judgments, tempests, floods, earthquakes, thunders as are unusual, or whatever else shall happen that is prodigious, witchcrafts, diabolical possessions, and remarkable judgments on noted sinners. Yet I have left unmentioned some censurable occurrences in the story of our late colonies, as things no less unuseful than improper to be raised out of the grave, wherein oblivion hath now buried them.

Haec ipsi miserrima vidi! (These things these wretched eyes have beheld!-Ed.)

VI.) Excerpt from "Treasure Hunting in America" by Orin Russell, 1966 Edition

Amongst the many curious manias and fads among hunters of buried treasure, one of the most peculiar, as well as having no basis in fact save for the obscure legends of the aborigines, was that of the late 1700's, that along the banks of the Miskatonic was hidden a lost Mayan (or earlier) treasure and many otherwise fine folks succumbed to the lure, little realizing that the area was one of the wildest, least-explored areas in North America, (as it still is today, over 200 years later). Most searchers simply disappeared, possibly starved to death, eaten by wild animals, or poisoned by a wide variety of the dangerous flora of the region. A few are known to have returned, half-mad and raving of cyclopean temples, underground tombs and treasures, and, my own personal favorite, "the blazing black eyes of the dark lord in his dark lair!" The mania for hunting the "treasure" continued until the early 1800's, when the so-called "Miskatonic Valley Earthquake" of Oct. 31, 1802 apparently cut the River's water supply in half and altered the landscape's contours irrevocably. The legend slowly petered out and today is remembered only as a quaint folklore, though a few curious bas-reliefs were found depicting carvings of squids and bat-like objects carrying off or eating humans. These were, of course, denounced by the authorities as crude hoaxes and frauds.

VII.) From: Precursors of Poe in America: Early Poetry of the Fantastic and Macabre (Unpublished Dissertation by Jill Johnson, 1982)

One early influence of Edgar Allan Poe, little recognized even in his own time, was the so-called "Mad Poet" Justin Geoffry, (1798-1822?) born and raised in Dunwich, in the Miskatonic Valley, whose gloomy surroundings well recall Poe's own "Ghoul-haunted woodland of weir":

By the mountain--near the river
Murmuring lowly, murmuring ever
By the grey woods--by the swamp
Where the bats and toads encamp

By the dismal sunless pool
Where dwells the Ghoul--

Geoffrey, who vanished in 1822, and henceforth presumed dead, wrote his magnum opus, "The River That Runs Uphill" in 1820 (privately published after his release from a madhouse). A scant few stanzas remain, yet it hearkens forward to Poe's own "City in the Sea", with its vision of a city/tomb brooding anciently in a vast underground cavern:

For Yog hath frozen into stone
In a strange tomb lying alone
A score of leagues out west
Where the hideous sun unblest'
Hath never shone on his ghastly throne
For resignedly beneath a stone sky
Those melancholy waters lie
He is not dead who sleeps eternal
And when he wakes--O' Universe Infernal!

Its known that Poe, who lived for a time in nearby Providence, ran away from home briefly at age fourteen, and one can easily surmise that he spent much of his time wandering the Miskatonic's lonely banks, for no more would his early youthful poetry deal with love or chivalry; henceforth his words would stride a forbidden landscape of silent swamps, dank tarns and ghoul-haunted pools, and it was rumored of him, as of the "Mad Poet" Justin Geoffrey and other "moon-touched" persons of those days, that he "hath drunk of the waters of the Miskatonic."

VIII.) Excerpt from "Folklore of Rhode Island", Heritage Press, 1956

The legend of the "Jersey Devil" concerns the superstition that at certain times of the year when "the stars are right", strange creatures appear from hidden subterranean lairs and abduct humans for use in unknown rituals. These beliefs pre-date Columbus, though the Indians referred to the beings as "Wendigos" or "Windwalkers." Most sightings of eerie creatures and lights can be attributed to the many wild wolves that roam the area's marshes, or to the swamp gas that can play fantastic tricks on one's eyes. I myself recall one moonless night, seeing a gigantic man-sized bat fly out of a green glow which was seeping out of an underground cave; but it took only a moment's sober reflection to realize such things cannot be. Bigfoot, Lizardman, and alien abductions all feed the legend of the Jersey Devil, and I expect the Loch Ness Monster to begin appearing shortly now that the dam is completed near Arkham and we have, finally, a respectable lake.

The area where the alleged creatures are sighted lies mostly along the polluted Miskatonic River, the fact that the locale has one of the highest rates of missing persons reported in the nation. However, this is attributed to the fact that it is also one of the wildest, most inaccessible and resultingly unexplored regions in the world. Anyone with the misfortune to be lost in that great wilderness would have little sustenance, save for varieties of poisonous and scarcely edible plants and tubers.

IX.) Passage from "Crime in America", by Colin Wilson, 1976

One of the most bizarre cults to come to my attention was that of the "Acolytes of Yog-Sothoth", a group of hippies who homesteaded in the 60's near Dunwich along the Miskatonic River. They were originally a "flower-power/peace-love" type of commune till the group began experimenting with some wild mushrooms they'd found in the woods and began having strange

visions and soon took to worshipping a pagan deity, the "Black Snake of the Cave with a Thousand Young", who dwelt in a cavern nearby and who, in dreams, promised his followers great things, including eternal life, if they'd free him from his underground tomb/prison. The commune spent months searching and digging for the cavern and nightly would take their strange mushrooms and their Lord would speak to them in dreams and visions. The Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms raided the farm on Halloween of 1970 after reports of drug use and possible child sacrifice and the "Acolytes" barricaded themselves in and set the place afire, chanting incomprehensible Latin gibberish as the flames crashed around them. Twenty-one bodies were found in the rubble but no children, which led many to suspect there were indeed child sacrifices somewhere in the vast surrounding wilderness. Peculiar bas-reliefs were found amongst the charred ruins but these were attributed to the grotesque visions of the drug-crazed hippies, despite their apparent antiquity.

X.) Excerpt from "Anatomy of a Phenomena", by J. Vallee, Ballantine Books, 1965

The universe might contain intelligent creatures exhibiting such an organization that no model of it could be constructed on the basis of currently classified concepts...the behavior of such beings would then necessarily appear random or absurd, or would go undetected, especially if they possessed physical means of retiring at will beyond the human perceptual range.

XI.) Excerpt from Top Secret Report, Space Shuttle Atlantis, 1994 Mission Synopsis

Strange magnetic anomalies along the Miskatonic River Valley detected by the CIA sponsored Atlantis Shuttle Mission led to the further observation that, at certain times of the year, chiefly May 1 and October 31 of every year, an apparently intelligent microwave radio source, similar to that used by bats for navigation, streams out from the valley and into the galaxy, directed to a point near the planet Pluto, now designated Stellar Object #YUG-034 (since named Yuggoth). The Large Space Telescope was directed to the coordinates indicated and discovered a previously unknown Plutonian moon. There were apparent "answers" to the transmissions directed back to Earth. (Note: these were *not*, repeat, *not* echoes!) It was directed by Order of the President, to explode a small neutron bomb underground at the Miskatonic Valley Transmission Source and to attribute the resulting blast to an earthquake in that desolate region. This was conducted on Nov. 2 of this year TOP SECRETLY by a special task force after consultation with the Russians and other allies. The fact that an apparently intelligent race has been observing us for millions of years was likewise classified and a secret U.N. Sponsored Space Flight to Yuggoth was put into the planning stages. Attempts will continue to decipher alien transmissions.

XII.) Headlines: L.A. Times Oct. 30, 2024 A.D.: U.N. SPACESHIP "EXPLORER" LANDS ON YUGGOTH WITH U.S., RUSSIAN, AND ENGLISH ASTRONAUTS ABOARD! WORLD REJOICES! TRIUMPH OF COOPERATION!

XIII.) TOP SECRET/EYES ONLY

Radio Transmission from U.N. Spaceship Explorer 1
Crew: John Bowman, Capt. U.S.A.

Nikolai Shakorov, Navigator, Russian
Bert McGonagle, Doctor, U.K.

Voice of Capt. Bowman

Even inside our suits it feels cold, though we have our heating units on full. We're following a small river which by rights should be frozen solid but I can run my glove through it and it seems to have the consistency of mercury. We're continuing to trace the source of the transmissions directed towards earth and it appears to be coming from a large cavern from which the river issues...it'll take us a while to walk there...will cease transmitting temporarily...

Later

We're in luck, there's a greenish-gold glow or phosphorescence coming from the cavern walls so we can turn off our helmet lamps. It's a relief to see some light again after the stygian darkness and desolate moon-like landscape outside where even the sun is no more than a weak star in the velvet distance, though even with the green glow it's an eerie feeling in the cave, haunted even, or eldritch, if one can use so archaic a term...we continue to move downhill, following the course of the river as it...appears to be flowing uphill! Nikolai, Bert and I look at each other in wonder; yes...it's definitely running slowly uphill as the cavern we follow goes ever downwards.

Later

We're now clambering over gigantic carven steps, each of them four feet tall and it's hard going, even in our new streamlined space suits, and we can finally turn our heating packs down for we've worked up quite a sweat. We each take a water and protein pill and continue on, amazed continually at the river flowing uphill, even perpendicularly over these huge stone blocks. The bas-reliefs which are carved throughout the grotto walls appear to show giant bat-like objects flying through outer space with human beings (or anthropods anyway) clutched in their claws/talons. An occasional carving shows the bat-beings ripping open the chests of their captives and eating or holding aloft a heart or other organ. A frequent bat/body litters the floor of the river/walkway and we'll be sure and bring one back to the ship later for Dr. McGonagle to analyze.

Later

We've finally come to the shore of a huge lake, with an island in the distance surmounted by a squat stone-like structure. Overhead in the cavern roof we can see millions of large bats hanging upside down. From the near mummified condition of the ones we've seen thus far I'd guess their periods of hibernation range into the years or decades this far out in space. There's no apparent way to get to the island, but Nikolai points out that we've trained in our space suits in underwater pools on earth and that we can simply walk across and so we shall. Dr. McGonagle points out that we should be careful of the submerged flora, for a puncture or tear in our suits would be fatal. All we've seen thus far are a species of loathsome, noxious toadstools and some algae, yet we shall surely be leery of the fungi here on Yuggoth. We start across the lake now, signing off.

Later

It took much longer than anticipated to cross the lake. The deeper water has a mud or glue-like consistency, but we finally made it and refreshed ourselves on the island's shore with protein pills and water tablets for hopefully the final push. We can see from here that the squat building is actually much larger close-up, graven out of a solid piece of granite-like substance with a sheen similar to black obsidian from which we can see ourselves reflected.

Later

Disaster has struck while searching for an entrance to the temple/structure; a *human being* appeared from out of an alcove, naked and without a pressure suit, breathing I don't know how, but he jumped out at us with wild, pink eyes, long white matted hair and stabbed poor Nikolai, who died the instant his suit was punctured in that -2500 degree temperature as the wild man tore open Nikolai's chest pack with his bloody stone knife and long, taloned fingers. He was slashing into his rib cage when I heard a loud explosion and saw the wild man drop to the ground, his head exploding from a blast by Dr. MoGonagle's Zero-Gravity Blaster. It all happened so fast I could not move. In that freezing atmosphere our poor Russian Comrade was already mummified and would soon crumble into dust due to the extreme cold. We now turn to the body of the wild man. The Doctor's blast had blown off the entire rear half of his skull but apparently there is/was another, older bullethole in his forehead, whose source we are at a loss to understand. Turning the body over, we are astounded to see a flag of France tattooed on his left shoulder, not the familiar tricolor of today, but that of a nation dead over 200 years ago. We are both demoralized, but agree finally that regardless, we're exhausted and need to sleep for awhile. We push the wild man's body aside, still incredulous that the cold is having no effect on him and wondering what he managed to breathe or eat. We examine the stone temple/tomb and find it empty except for a man-sized slab in the center and a further flight of stone stairs which lead downwards from one corner. We agree to explore this tomorrow and I fall asleep exhausted.

Later

I know not if I dream or am awake but pray the former. I seem to fall through vast chasms within chasms, past giant bats with tentacles growing out of their faces who chirp and chitter mockingly as I walk down green-lit stairways that have strange angles and prisms, down to where it seems my Lord awaits me, he bids me with soothing words to remove the slab from his tomb /prison and release him to the world and I shall be his prophet and his beloved and I do as he bids but cannot look down at him lest I go mad. Then he whispers, tells me there's one more thing and yes, master, yes-- yes, as I weep and run back up those steps to where my friend Bert lies sleeping and I plunge the dagger of the wild man into his chest and yes master! Yes! I will and I must tear off my oxygen mask and Yes! I will *eat* that delicious heart for the Wonder and the Glory of the Dark Lord Yog-Sothoth! Yes! And I scream out: "*Vae! Vae! Malefici Yog-Sothoth! Hypnos Damnatus Ry'leh Monstro!*"

End of Transmission

XIV) Suicide Note found among the papers of the late Prof. John w. Allan III, Nov. 1, 1994

My search for the source of the Miskatonic has led me down strange pathways I would not willingly pass through again. My studies into the area's peculiar geology led me to the discovery of traces of iridium along the river strata, a substance found *only* in outer space and not native to Earth. This led me to the conclusion that some five million years ago an extra-terrestrial object, a meteorite most likely, crashed down, carving a long furrow down the Northeastern United States which resulted in channeling out the entire present-day Miskatonic Valley. Furthermore, its unseen gradual radiation caused minute molecular changes in the surrounding vegetation, mutating animal cells and even deforming the very nature of the water, air, and earth. Further investigation revealed an unusually high ratio of mental aberrations amongst the region's populace, including mental

abnormalities, high divorce rates, sub-par I.Q. levels, crime rates, cultish behavior, etc.

I had high hopes, in my long back-packing treks through the area, of finding samples of the mutated mushrooms reputed to give the chasm-like visions so oft' reported, but though I found many previously unknown varieties, I was not foolish enough to experiment on my own with them and so it was that I came to meet the Wild Witch of the Miskatonic, the much feared, legendary Yolanda Dragwyla.

I've given my word not to divulge certain esoteric details of the rites which followed, but the final result is that she came to my apartment last night on Halloween, the time when "the stars were right", for the ritual, along with a bag full of mushrooms which she bade me boil and steep in tea. She then pushed the furniture against the walls and proceeded to trace mystic signs in green powder in the middle of my living room floor. As midnight approached she bade me drink the mushroom broth down as she began chanting those foreboding Latin phrases I'd come to know: "*Vae! Vae! Malefici Yog-Sothoth! Hypnos Damnatus Ry'leh Monstro!*"

I swallowed the vile broth and immediately started to feel dizzy, reaching out to steady myself on Yolanda's arm and, looking at her, was shocked to see a mass of writhing tentacles waving worm-like where her face should be and a maw-like mouth chanted louder and louder, buzzing noises like bees, the shrill fluting of discordant pipes, and a large hole appeared in the middle of my floor, outlined by Yolanda's mystic green powder design. I felt weak and stared downwards at a vast abyss of floating stars and galaxies beyond number. Her chanting ceased.

I pointed towards the abyss.

"What is it?" I asked.

"It is the End to your search," she replied.

"But where does it lead, and how shall I follow?"

"You must cast yourself into the abyss, it is the only way!"

I was not in my right mind, for without thinking further I flung myself into the yawning chasm and fell floating forever through the void. I dimly recall periods of falling in which my senses half-turned and took notes on the visions I saw; Druid priests landing on the Jersey coast 1,000 years before Columbus and worshipping the "Feaster from the Stars", Indian tribes holding unholy rites, Secret Reports of the Space Shuttle Atlantis, Plutonian voyages of the far future...and worse I saw finally the Dark Lord himself! The Black Snake of the Cave with 1,000 Young, The Eater of Souls, the Feaster from Afar! I saw his blasphemous face! And he opened his ungodly eyes! The Universe was in them and the Galaxies were his plaything, a toy of the moment. Then *he saw me!* I screamed in pain and could feel his mental tentacles squeezing my very thoughts and soul. I gibbered and whimpered in fear, though one part of me wept with delight that he'd deigned to notice me. I bowed and worshipped my Dark Lord, my precious, my birthday gift, my Master who bids me do him a little thing, a small task and I fawn in gratitude, Yes! And I scream and I fall again forever through the yawning abyss of stars and I swoon and when I awaken the Sorceress Yolanda is lying dead on my living room floor. The sun is shining brightly, exposing the bloody, gaping hole in her chest and a half-eaten human heart which I hold in my hand.

I clean up the mess as best I can, retching constantly, my lips still covered in her witch's blood. I load her body in the trunk of my car and bury her along the banks of the Miskatonic. She'll not be missed, the fearsome River Hag had taken one last journey. I spend the rest of the afternoon trying to put my notes in order, but as night falls I long once again for the taste of Hearts for the Master and I know now what I must do.

Farewell.

Postscript

The above papers were found among the effects of the late Prof. John W. Allan III, whose recent suicide was a great loss to the world of Geographical History. He had been noticeably unbalanced for some time and these papers obviously a sketch for a work of fiction, though why he burned his original documents and how he learned of the recent Magnetic Anomalies discovered along the Miskatonic River Valley, which only occurred after his death remains entirely a matter of conjecture. ☸



NIGHT GAUNTS

HOWARD PHILLIPS LOVECRAFT WROTE A NUMBER OF STORIES INSPIRED BY THE ELABORATE PROSE OF LORD DUNSANY. HE CREATED A DREAMWORLD WHERE THE PROTAGONIST, RANDOLPH CARTER FOUND ADVENTURE AND TERROR IN SUCH TALES AS "THE SILVER KEY" AND "THE DREAM QUEST OF UNKNOWN KADATH". NIGHT-GAUNTS WERE AMONG THE STRANGE, ELDRITCH DENIZENS OF THESE FABLED, FABULOUS LANDS!

"FOR OVER AN HOUR I WAS LEAD SPELLBOUND THROUGH ILLIMITABLE GULFS AND CHASMS OF ELFIN BEAUTY AND DAEMONIC MYSTERY—DOWN, DOWN TO THE SUNLESS SECRETS OF THE GNOMES AND NIGHT-GAUNTS; AND THE WORLDS WHERE WEB-WINGED MONSTERS AND FABULOUS GARGOYLES REIGN IN UNDISPUTED HORROR..." — HPL IN A LETTER DESCRIBING HIS VISIT TO THE ENDLESS CAVERNS IN THE SHENANDOAH VALLEY, 1928.



ASTRAL PROJECTION

by
K.S. Hardy

Man's quest for the mysteries of life have taken him on journeys that are oftentimes best left untrod. Unfortunately, his curiosity has got the better of him on more than one occasion, especially when the path leads to the dangerous byways of the occult. It is also quite beneficial to the journeyman that he has a happy and comfortable home in which to return.

I had read of such trips. At first I scoffed at the idea like any educated man would; it sounded too much like the fantasy of an over-stimulated imagination, or worse, some hoax concocted by the more intellectual criminal to defraud the more gullible amongst us. But then I learned that even such minds as respected and honored as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle had investigated the stories with the scientific means available at the time.

I speak of course of astral projection, the ability of the soul of a person to leave his body on a limited journey and to return at his bidding to recount his adventure. It is akin but is not to be confused with astral writing, which is what I am using to tell my story to you now; where a spirit enters another, usually a medium, during a trance and communicates from beyond by manipulating the pen holding hand of the trance subject across a sheet of paper. As this is my first time "writing" from the other side, please excuse my penmanship.

Back to my story, my own tragedy.

More than a year ago I had read in some obscure journal I had stumbled across, an article that outlined the steps needed to accomplish an out of the body excursion. Reading about strange phenomena had always been a hobby of mine but until then I had never found instructions on how to attempt any of them. Always there was a recounting of the journey, but never how to begin the trip.

For several days I brooded on the idea and finally decided, as a lark, to try it myself. After much cajoling I managed to convince my wife to attend upon me during my experiment. She was the daughter of a church rector and therefore found anything even hinting of the occult distasteful to her. But I needed her at my side, not only to observe, but to be there if anything should go wrong.

I picked a quiet evening for the projection. With much show of reluctance my wife sat by the bed with her embroidery. I lay down and began to enter my trance state. I closed my eyes and then closed my ears, in a sense, ignoring all sounds except my own breathing which soon

sounded like a soft wind souging in and out of a pine wood. And my blood, I could hear it flowing through my veins like tiny rivers. After a short while even those sounds diminished.

I began drawing my soul out of my body. I could feel it ebbing like some mysterious tide, *withdrawing* from my extremities, and as it did, my flesh began to tingle as if with tiny needles, much like when a foot goes to sleep. I concentrated. This must be a side effect of the projection. I must not let it distract me. I continued to withdraw my soul, bringing it up my torso, and finally collecting it in my forehead as described in the instructions. It generated a pleasant warmth there. I could imagine it as a glistening diamond slowly revolving there behind the bone.

Now, I envisioned my soul seeping through the bone and skin like a root exploring new soil. By the change in temperature I knew it was working. Slowly, more and more passed through. Gradually my entire soul lay outside my body, resting balanced on my forehead. It was attached there. The life force held it like a magnet to my body. Sustaining that tenuous hold I lifted my soul up and away. It rose higher and higher. My soul was an exact duplicate of my body, an invisible copy unnoticed by my wife, floating above me. Cautiously I opened my soul's eyes. I could see myself on the bed. I could see my wife by my side, her attention focused on her stitching. I rose higher, passing though the ceiling and into the attic, but still maintaining that forehead touch like a rope to shore. Again I rose

higher, out of the house, above the roof.

Oh, it was beautiful. The stars were as bright as individual suns, and each one a different subtle shade of color. And I could see the very molecules of the air dancing about me and shining like wet sand on a morning drenched beach. I rose high above my house. I could see across the city of London sparkling in the night from where I floated like a spiritual kite.

Suddenly I felt a sharp, indescribable pain. It was more than just a sensation, more than a wounding, it was a dislocation, a separation. Something was wrong. I began to travel down my soul thread, the umbilical that kept me tied to my body. Down, down, like a drowning man pulling along a tossed lifeline. Back through the roof of the house I traveled, back through the ceiling of the room to find my wife sitting there beside by gray, empty body, laughing.

She was laughing, holding her sewing scissors in her hand. She had cut my thread! I had no way back into my body. That small, spider web thin line of soul was the only road, the only entrance for my return. I had told her that. She knew that. That is why I had had her watch over me, to guard against any disruption that might prevent my return.

And she sat there and laughed. The scissors in her hand.

So now, I roam. I have no body to return to, it has already begun to decay in the grave. I drift now in the dark void, the always night. I am disembodied. I cannot rest. I roam. ☆

LOVECRAFT'S CREEPY CLASSIC

What would you do if you were suddenly aware of your impending fate? The study of strange phenomena has proven that it can certainly happen to any of us. Even stranger is, sometimes the bearer of such tidings is someone you didn't know existed until after you'd created him yourself. Now, feel that cool shiver run down your spine? Time to crank up the thermostat in. . .

AUGUST HEAT

by

William Fryer (W.F.) Harvey

Peniston Road, Clapham,
20th August, 190-.

public swimming bath, when the idea came.

I began to draw. So intent was I on my work that I left my lunch untouched, only stopping work when the clock of St. Jude's struck four. The final result, for a hurried sketch, was, I felt sure, the best thing I had done.

It showed a criminal in the dock immediately after the judge had pronounced sentence. The man was fat--enormously fat. The flesh hung in rolls about his chin; it creased his huge, stumpy neck. He was clean shaven (perhaps I should say a few days before he must have been clean shaven) and almost bald. He stood in the dock, his short, clumsy fingers clasping the rail, looking straight in front of him. The feeling that his expression conveyed was not so much one of horror as of utter, absolute collapse. There seemed nothing in the man strong enough to sustain that mountain of flesh.

I rolled up the sketch, and without quite knowing why, placed it in my pocket. Then with the rare sense of happiness which the knowledge of a good

I have had what I believe to be the most remarkable day in my life, and while the events are still fresh in my mind, I wish to put them down on paper as clearly as possible.

Let me say at the outset that my name is James Clarence Withencroft. I am forty years old, in perfect health, never having known a day's illness.

By profession I am an artist, not a very successful one, but I earn enough money by my black-and-white work to satisfy my necessary wants. My only near relative, a sister, died five years ago, so that I am independent.

I breakfasted this morning at nine, and after glancing through the morning paper I lighted my pipe and proceeded to let my mind wander in the hope that I might chance upon some subject for my pencil. The room, though door and windows were open, was oppressively hot, and I had just made up my mind that the coolest and most comfortable place in the neighbourhood would be the deep end of the

thing well done gives, I left the house.

I believe that I set out with the idea of calling upon Trenton, for I remember walking along Lytton Street and turning to the right along Gilchrist Road at the bottom of the hill where the men were at work on the new tram lines.

From there onwards I have only the vaguest recollections of where I went. The one thing of which I was fully conscious was the awful heat, that came up from the dusty asphalt pavement as an almost palpable wave. I longed for the thunder promised by the great banks of copper-coloured cloud that hung low over the western sky.

I must have walked five or six miles, when a small boy roused me from my reverie by asking the time.

It was twenty minutes to seven.

When he left me I began to take stock of my bearings. I found myself standing before a gate that led into a yard bordered by a strip of thirsty earth, where there were flowers, purple stock and scarlet geranium. Above the entrance was a board with the inscription:

CHS. ATKINSON MONUMENTAL MASON
WORKER IN ENGLISH AND ITALIAN
MARBLES

From the yard itself came a cheery whistle, the noise of hammer blows, and the cold sound of steel meeting stone. A sudden impulse made me enter.

A man was sitting with his back towards me, busy at work on a slab of curiously veined marble. He turned round as he heard my steps and I stopped short.

It was the man I had been drawing, whose portrait lay in my pocket.

He sat there, huge and elephantine, the sweat pouring from his scalp, which he wiped with a red silk handkerchief. But though the face was the same, the expression was absolutely different. He greeted me smiling, as if we were old friends, and shook my hand.

I apologised for my intrusion.

"Everything is hot and glary outside," I said. "This seems an oasis in the wilderness."

"I don't know about the oasis," he replied, "but it certainly is hot, as hot as hell. Take a seat, sir!"

He pointed to the end of the gravestone on which he was at work, and I sat down.

"That's a beautiful piece of stone you've got hold of," I said.

He shook his head. "In a way it is," he answered; "the surface here is as fine as anything you could wish, but there's a big flaw at the back, though I don't expect you'd ever notice it. I could never make really a good job of a bit of marble like that. It would be all right in the summer like this; it wouldn't mind the blasted heat. But wait till the winter comes. There's nothing quite like frost to find out the weak points in stone."

"Then what's it for?" I asked.

The man burst out laughing. "You'd hardly believe me if I was to tell you it's for an exhibition, but it's the truth. Artists have exhibitions: so do grocers and butchers; we have them too. All the latest little things in headstones, you know."

He went on to talk of marbles, which sort best withstood wind and rain, and which were easiest to work; then of his garden and a new sort of carnation he had

bought. At the end of every other minute he would drop his tools, wipe the shining head, and curse the heat.

I said little, for I felt uneasy. There was something unnatural, uncanny, in meeting this man. I tried at first to persuade myself that I had seen him before, that his face, unknown to me, had found a place in some out-of-the-way corner of my memory, but I knew that I was practicing little more than a plausible piece of self-deception.

Mr. Atkinson finished his work, spat on the ground, and got up with a sigh of relief.

"There! what do you think of that?" he said, with an air of evident pride.

The inscription which I read for the first time was this:

SACRED TO THE MEMORY
OF

JAMES CLARENCE WITHENCROFT.

BORN JAN. 18TH, 1860.

HE PASSED AWAY VERY SUDDENLY

ON AUGUST 20TH, 190-

"In the midst of life we are in death"

For some time I sat in silence. Then a cold shudder ran down my spine. I asked him where he had seen the name.

"Oh, I didn't see it anywhere," replied Mr. Atkinson. "I wanted some name, and I put down the first that came into my head. Why do you want to know?"

"It's a strange coincidence, but it happens to be mine."

He gave a long, low whistle.

"And the dates?"

"I can only answer for one of them, and that's correct."

"It's a rum go!" he said.

But he knew less than I did. I told him of my morning's work. I took the sketch from my pocket and showed it to him. As he looked, the expression of his face

altered until it became more and more like that of the man I had drawn.

"And it was only the day before yesterday," he said, "that I told Maria there were no such things as ghosts!"

Neither of us had seen a ghost, but I knew what he meant.

"You probably heard my name," I said.

"And you must have seen me somewhere and have forgotten it!"

Were you at Clacton-on-Sea last July?"

I had never been to Clacton in my life. We were silent for some time. We were both looking at the same thing, the two dates on the gravestone, and one was right.

"Come inside and have some supper," said Mr. Atkinson.

His wife is a cheerful little woman, with the flaky red cheeks of the country-bred. Her husband introduced me as a friend of his who was an artist. The result was unfortunate, for after the sardines and watercress had been removed, she brought me out a Dore Bible, and I had to sit and express my admiration for nearly half an hour.

I went outside, and found Atkinson sitting on the gravestone smoking.

We resumed the conversation at the point we had left off.

"You must excuse my asking," I said, "but do you know of anything you've done for which you could be put on trial?"

He shook his head. "I'm not a bankrupt, the business is prosperous enough. Three years ago I gave turkeys to some of the guardians at Christmas, but that's all I can think of. And they were small ones, too," he added as an afterthought.

He got up, fetched a can from the porch, and began to water the flowers. "Twice a day regular in the hot weather," he said, "and then the heat sometimes gets the better of the delicate ones. And ferns, good Lord! they could never stand it. Where do you live?"

I told him my address. It would take an hour's quick walk to get back home.

"It's like this," he said, "We'll look at the matter straight. If you go back home to-night, you take your chance of accidents. A cart may run you over, and there's always banana skins and orange peel, to say nothing of falling ladders."

He spoke of the improbable with an intense seriousness that would have been laughable six hours before. But I did not laugh.

"The best thing we can do," he continued, "is for you to stay here till twelve o'clock. We'll go upstairs and smoke; it may be cooler inside."

To my surprise I agreed.

* * *

We are sitting in a long, low room beneath the eaves. Atkinson has sent his wife to bed. He himself is busy sharpening some tools at a little oilstone, smoking one of my cigars the while.

The air seems charged with thunder. I am writing this at a shaky table before the open window. The leg is cracked, and Atkinson, who seems a handy man with his tools, is going to mend it as soon as he has finished putting an edge on his chisel.

It is after eleven now. I shall be gone in less than an hour.

But the heat is stifling.

It is enough to send a man mad. ☛

THE MOON IN ASHES

by

Edmund X. DeJesus

Cinder-set the moon in ashes
Dropping low the iron hills
Wolves are prowling in the forest
Lurking through the broken mills

Face of night and feature smooth
Eyes athirst a dull red burn
To each he offers dusky hand
And one by one they take their turn

Maidens gather from the darkness
Steal beneath the towering trees
Writhing seek the one of darkness
Whisper softly on their knees

Mist enshrouded branches silent
Fade of echoes lighten gray
Trace of embers sigh to memory
Sweep a wisp at break of day

Like a groundswell he arises
One of darkness strides among them
Smoke and spirit all embodied
One of darkness stands above them

Cinder-set the moon in ashes
Dropping low the iron hills
Wolves are prowling in the forest
Lurking through the broken mills

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